NATION

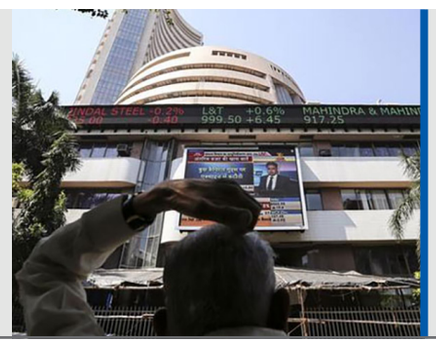
21 thatched houses of dalits torched in Bihar, 15 arrested

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Mkt hits record highs on US Fed rate cut; banks lead gains

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

Ash, Jaddu quell batting turmoil

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 20 SEPTEMBER 2024 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 15 RABI'L, 1446 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 239 | Pages: 8

TDP claims beef tallow, fish oil used in Tirupati laddus

Table -2. *S*-value equation for its suspected adulterants as per ISO 17678 : 2019

Equation No.	Foreign fat
1	Soya bean, Sunflower, Olive, Rapeseed, Linseed, Wheat germ, Maize germ, Cotton seed, Fish oil
2	Coconut and Palm kernel fat
3	Palm oil and Beef tallow
4	Lard
5	Total

A lab test report findings show beef tallow, fish oil and palm oil were being used to make the laddus, distributed as prasad, at the famous Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati *PHOTO: PTI*

AMARAVATI, 19 SEPT

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's claim that animal fat was used in Tirupati laddus during the previous government triggered a massive political row on Thursday with the YSRCP accusing Naidu of indulging in "heinous allegations" for political gains and TDP circulating a lab report to back the claim.

During an NDA legislative party meeting on Wednesday, Naidu claimed that the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government did not even spare Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Tirupati and used substandard ingredients and animal fat for making laddus.

TDP spokesperson Anam Venkata Ramana Reddy in a press conference claimed that the adulteration has been confirmed by a Gujarat-based livestock laboratory, on the ghee samples provided by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the famous Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple.

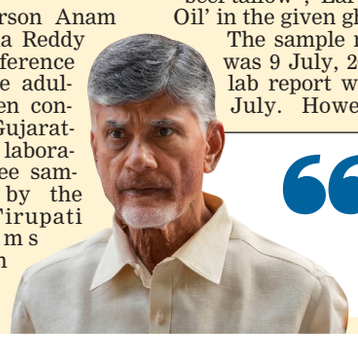
He displayed the purported lab report which apparently confirmed the presence of "beef tallow", 'Lard' and 'Fish Oil' in the given ghee sample.

The sample receipt date was 9 July, 2024 and the lab report was dated 16 July. However, there was no official confirmation on the lab report from either Andhra Pradesh government or TTD.

Senior YSRCP leader and Rajya Sabha member YV Subba Reddy, who served as chairman of TTD for four years, noted that Naidu's allegations had undermined the hallowed nature of the deity and hurt the sentiments of the devotees. He further said if Naidu fails to substantiate his allegations and comes up with proof , he would take legal recourse and would go up to the Supreme Court.

Andhra Pradesh BJP in a post on its 'X' handle said the remarks of CM Naidu on the laddu issue created anguish among all Hindus.

The saffron party appealed to the state government to immediately investigate all the issues that hurt the sentiments of Hindus in the previous government. *—PTI*



> **The previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government did not even spare Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Tirupati and used substandard ingredients and animal fat for making laddus.**
>
> -N Chandrababu Naidu, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister

Minor fire breaks out at MS Ramaiah Hospital

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Officials said a minor fire broke out at MS Ramaiah Medical College Hospital at Mathikere on Thursday. The fire began around 1 pm in the Critical Care Unit (CCU) on the first floor, rapidly spreading and leading to an evacuation of patients. Three fire tenders were rushed to the spot, they said. "A minor fire broke out at the CCU on the hospital's first floor. Four patients admitted to the CCU were immediately evacuated and shifted to safety. No patient or staff member was injured in the fire," Keshav Murthy, a senior official from the fire and emergency services department told Salar News. The fire has been extinguished. The hospital staff relocated 12 patients to a safer ward. *—Salar News*

Israel, Hezbollah exchange strikes; 2 IDF soldiers killed

BEIRUT, 19 SEPT

Israel and Hezbollah exchanged strikes along the border on Thursday as the militant group's leader Hassan Nasrallah vowed retaliation for attacks on the group's devices. According to Israel Defence Forces two Israeli soldiers were killed and several others were wounded in Hezbollah missile and drone attacks on northern Israel today, the IDF announces. Nasrallah said Israel targeted thousands of pagers and detonated them at the same time crossing a "red line". The Hezbollah leader vowed retaliation against Israel over this week's explosions in Lebanon saying "the enemy will face a severe and fair punishment from where they expect and don't expect". While its leader Nasrallah was speaking, Hezbollah announced four strikes on northern Israel. *—AP*

>>>More on Page 6

PM DOES A U-TURN, VOWS STATEHOOD FOR J&K

Modi attacks Cong; says no power can bring back Art 370

KATRA, 19 SEPT

Asking people to cast their votes wisely in the ongoing Assembly polls that are "linked to the future of Jammu and Kashmir", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the voters should ensure the sunset of the politics practised by Congress, NC and PDP, which have "inflicted wounds" in the region for years together.

Modi reiterated that his government will restore statehood in Jammu and Kashmir and also asserted that terrorism and separatism, which have weakened after the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, will be completely wiped out from the region.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a roadshow for J&K Assembly elections, in Katra, Jammu & Kashmir, on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Addressing a poll rally in Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, Modi also accused the Congress leadership of insulting Hindu gods and goddesses under a "well-thought-out conspiracy" and due to a "Naxal mindset".

This was the second rally addressed by the prime minister in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday and third in a week. He addressed another rally in Srinagar earlier in the day. On 14 September, Modi had addressed a rally in Doda.

"This election is for choosing the future of Jammu and Kashmir. This election is meant to take the new Jammu and Kashmir to new heights of development," he said.

Modi's rallies in Srinagar and Katra came a day after the first phase of polling in the Assembly election.

Launching a scathing attack on Congress, Modi alleged that for some votes, the opposition party is capable of putting "our faith and culture" at stake.

Referring to Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's recent visit to the United States, Modi said, "What does the heir of the Congress say on foreign land? You might have heard him saying that our devi, devtas are not gods. There is a tradition of praying to devi, devtas in our villages. We are believers. But these Congress people say they are not gods. Are you satisfied with his words? Is this not an insult to our gods? Should they not be punished for this?"

With such "Naxal ideology", he claimed that Congress leaders have attacked the Dogra tradition by levelling baseless allegations on Dogra rulers.

Modi said BJP honoured the last Dogra ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, by announcing a holiday on his birth anniversary and "we connected Jammu with the path of development". *—PTI*

6 OTHERS BOOKED TOO

BJP's Munirathna charged with rape and blackmail

RAMANAGARA, 19 SEPT

A case of rape, sexual harassment and criminal intimidation has been registered against BJP MLA Munirathna and six others, police said on Thursday.

It was registered following the complaint of a 40-year-old woman who alleged that the incident took place at a private resort within the Kaggalipura police station's jurisdiction.

Court grants bail

A special court for people's representatives on Thursday granted conditional bail to Munirathna, who has been arrested on various charges, including using casteist slurs.

The court, after hearing arguments on his bail plea, allowed his application on the condition of furnishing a Rs 2 lakh bond a.

The former minister was arrested on 14 September after two cases were registered against him. The Rajarajeshwari Nagar MLA is facing charges of harassing a Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike contractor for bribe, casteist slurs on a former corporator, and also cheating, criminal intimidation and insulting a woman's modesty. *—PTI*

Cong leaders protest against BJP's Munirathna near KPCC office in Bengaluru on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

US court summons Indian govt, NSA after Khalistan's Pannun files lawsuit

NEW YORK, 19 SEPT

Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun has filed a civil lawsuit against the Government of India and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, with a US court issuing summons in the case.

In New Delhi, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Thursday described as completely "unwarranted and unsubstantiated" imputations the lawsuit filed by Pannun, who heads the radical group Sikhs for Justice.

The summons issued by the US District Court for the Southern District of New York in the civil action lawsuit state that a response to the summons must be given within 21 days.

This comes just days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US from 21-23 September during which he will attend the Quad Leaders' Summit and address the UN's Summit.

The lawsuit has been filed against the Government of India and Doval and Nikhil Gupta, who has been charged by federal prosecutors in an indictment unsealed in November last year with working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun, who holds dual US and Canadian citizenships, on American soil. The lawsuit filed on 17 September alleges that Modi government engaged Gupta to hire an assassin in New York to murder him.

The 28-page complaint also refers to the death of Sikh separatist Hardeep Nijjar. *—PTI*

Union Min booked in K'taka for calling RaGa 'terrorist'

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

An FIR has been registered against Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu for his alleged remarks against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the statements he made in the US about the condition of Sikhs in India, police said on Thursday.

The case was filed based on a complaint by one of the office-bearers of Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, they said.

"The FIR was registered under sections 353 (2), 192 and 196 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at High Grounds police station here," a police officer said. Attacking the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha over the statements about the condition of Sikhs in India, Bittu said if those "manufacturing bombs" were supporting him, he is the "number one terrorist".

Bittu, who is Minister of State for Food Processing, said, "Congress always tries to intimidate by filing FIRs and police cases. I am not at all concerned. Whatever Gandhi has said about the conditions of Sikhs in India, how can I subscribe to that view."

Ravneet Bittu *PHOTO: ANI*

Asked whether he stands by his comments, the minister said, "Jab padgi bhandi ho, toh bayaan se peeche hat sakta hai koi? (Can anyone wearing a Turban go back on his words)".

Meanwhile, ruling BJP in Madhya Pradesh sought registration of a FIR against Rahul for `insulting' the country and Modi on foreign soil.

A delegation led by state BJP chief V D Sharma complained to additional deputy commissioner of police Shailendra Singh of the Bhopal crime branch. *—PTI*

IN LETTER, NADDA SLAMS KHARGE ON RAGA'S REMARK

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

BJP president JP Nadda on Thursday accused Rahul Gandhi of having a history of abusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and OBCs, and of siding with anti-India forces, days after the Opposition party charged ruling alliance members with using violent language against the Leader of Opposition. In a tit for tat response after Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge wrote to Modi over some members of the BJP-led NDA using "extremely objectionable" statements against Gandhi, Nadda cited his party's own litany of complaints against the LoP. Nadda said Rahul has a history of the entire OBC, including the PM, a "thief" and using extremely indecent words against Modi. *—PTI*

RESUME WORK ON SATURDAY

Kolkata docs call off month-long protest

KOLKATA, 19 SEPT

Protesting junior doctors in Kolkata on Thursday called off month-long protest over colleague's rape and murder, saying they will return to work on Saturday and resume emergency medical services. This decision comes after several days of protest and disruption in services, which impacted healthcare across Kolkata. The doctors called of the strike after West Bengal government issued a list of directives on the safety, security and conducive environment for healthcare professionals, saying those orders need to be implemented immediately.

The directives came a day after the government held a meeting with agitating junior doctors over the same issues.

Chief Secretary Manoj Pant, in a two-page communication to Principal Secretary (health) NS Nigam, issued 10 directives including the need for "adequate availability of on-duty rooms, washrooms, CCTVs, drinking water facilities in the healthcare facilities." Works in this connection must be completed as early as possible, the communication said. The directive came hours after the junior doctors submitted to Pant a draft of the key points of their meeting with the West Bengal government last night and were awaiting the state's response. It also stated that the state has appointed former DGP Surajit Kar Purkayastha to conduct security audits of all medical colleges and hospitals.

Doctors protest in front of West Bengal Medical Council office over the RG Kar Hospital incident, in Kolkata, on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Bengal council cancels Ghosh's licence

The West Bengal Medical Council (WBMC) on Thursday cancelled the registration of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital's former principal Sandip Ghosh, an official said. Ghosh, who is in CBI custody, has been removed from the list of Registered Medical Practitioners maintained by the WBMC, he said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

In H'yana manifesto, BJP makes 20 promises

CHANDIGARH, 19 SEPT

BJP on Thursday released its manifesto for 5 October Haryana assembly polls, promising a monthly assistance of Rs 2,100 for women, two lakh government jobs for the youth and guaranteed government job for Agniveers hailing from the state.

Union minister and BJP president JP Nadda released the 'sankalp patra' in presence of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Union Ministers M L Khattar, Rao Inderjit Singh, Krishan Pal Gurjar and head of the party's poll manifesto committee, at Rohtak.

While releasing the party manifesto, Nadda hit out at the Congress and accused it of reducing poll manifestos to a diluted document . Facing flak from Opposition parties over the Agnipath scheme, which is for short-term military recruitment, Nadda said there will be a guarantee of government job for every Agniveer from Haryana. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

22 injured after mini truck collides with car in Mandya

MANDYA, 19 SEPT

Twenty-two people were injured, including two seriously, after a mini truck collided with a car in Mandya district on Thursday, police said. The accident happened between KM Doddi and Maddur, they said. The mini truck was overloaded with people and collided with a car in which four people were travelling, police said. "All of them were shifted to hospital. Only two among the 22 have sustained serious injuries while rest of them have got minor injuries," a senior police officer said. A case has been registered in connection with the accident, he said. —*PTI*

Srirangapatna Dasara to be held from 4 to 7 Oct

MYSURU, 19 SEPT

Mandya district administration will hold Srirangapatna Dasara festival from 4 to 7 October in a grand manner, said Agriculture and District in-charge Minister N Cheluvarayaswamy on Thursday. The minister released a logo for the festival during a meeting held at Cauvery Auditorium at the Zilla Panchayat office in Mandya. The festival will feature rituals for Goddess Chamundeshwari, processions and cultural events. The government will also conduct Cauvery Aarti at KRS Reservoir on the lines of Ganga Aarti, a religious ceremony performed on the banks of river Ganga in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, during the Dasara festival, the minister said.A 28-member delegation from the State will be visiting Haridwar-Varanasi on Friday. Once they submit a report, the State government will start Cauvery Arathi. —*Salar News*

Contractors' Association Prez Kempanna dies

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Karnataka State Contractors' Association President **D Kempanna**, who was at the forefront in its fight in exposing the alleged "40 per cent commission" scam during the previous BJP government, passed away here on Thursday. The 84-year-old died due to heart attack at his residence, and is survived by his wife, a son and three daughters, sources close to him said. The contractors' association under the leadership of Kempanna had during the previous BJP government alleged "harassment" by ministers, elected representatives and others, accusing them of demanding 40 per cent commission for awarding contracts and clearing bills, and had also written a letter to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in this regard. CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar condoled the death of Kemapanna. —*PTI*

RIys to hold wall painting contest for students

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

South Western Railway (SWR) has announced a wall painting competition to be held at Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal (SMVT), Bengaluru, on 29 September as a part of 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign. The competition is open to college students, and it aims to raise public awareness about cleanliness through artistic expression. Participants must register by 24 September by contacting the organising team at 9164871716 or emailing denhmsbc2024@gmail.com. The Swachhata Hi Seva campaign, which runs from 17 September to 1 October, is a nationwide drive aimed at promoting cleanliness and environmental sustainability. Across its divisions, SWR is conducting activities to involve railway employees, passengers, and the public in efforts to ensure clean and hygienic surroundings at railway stations, trains, offices, and other premises. —*Salar News*

Guv seeks report from govt on rule violation by MUDA

Agency 'undertook' illegal works after verbal instruction from CM

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Thaawarchand Gehlot termed the work carried out in violation of rules at Siddaramaiah's Varuna constituency as "serious in nature" *PHOTO: PTI*

Governor has sought a detailed report from the government in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) allegedly undertaking works worth Rs 387 crore in violation of rules, purportedly on the verbal instruction of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in his Varuna constituency and Srirangapatna.

Thaawarchand Gehlot has written to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh citing detailed representation submitted to him by a complainant in this regard, and terming the allegation as "serious in nature."

The letter comes close on the heels of the Governor according sanction on 16 August for investigation against Siddaramaiah under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for the commission of the alleged offences as mentioned in the petitions of Pradeep Kumar SP, TJ Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna, in connection with a MUDA site allotment case.

The Governor said in the letter that a person named P S Nataraj from Mysuru has submitted a detailed representation dated 27 August, wherein, he has informed that the MUDA has undertaken works worth Rs 387 crore in violation of section 15 and 25 of the Karnataka Urban Development Authority Act, 1987 on the Chief Minister's oral instruction in Varuna and also in Srirangapatna constituency."

The petitioner has also informed that in spite of non-availability of funds in the Authority, a decision has been taken on the oral instruction, he said, adding, "further, he alleged that by doing this the authority has misused its power and requested to conduct enquiry from CBI."

The High Court on September 12 completed its hearing on Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of Governor Gehlot's approval for investigation against him in the MUDA site allotment case and reserved its orders.

On August 19, Siddaramaiah moved the High Court challenging the legality of the Governor's order.

In the MUDA site allotment case, it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife B M Parvathi in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA.

The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where MUDA developed a residential layout.

Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts. Opposition and some activists have also claimed that Parvathi had no legal title over this 3.16 acres. —*PTI*

CM: State will withhold nod to Goa-Tamnar plan

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Siddaramaiah *PHOTO: PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said State will withhold its approval to Goa-Tamnar transmission project, which will be passing through ecologically sensitive Western Ghats region, after Goa objected to its Kalasa-Bandhuri Nala Diversion project.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, the Chief Minister urged Modi to intervene and ensure that the Kalasa project receives the necessary wildlife clearances at the earliest. The project, which is crucial for fulfilling the drinking water needs of North Karnataka, has been pending for an unusually long time for wildlife clearance from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Goa Chief Wildlife Warden has also passed an illegal order restraining Karnataka from undertaking any activities in it, Siddaramaiah said.

In view of the objections raised by Goa to the legitimate and long-pending drinking water project with minimum disruption to wildlife, and the consequent litigation that Karnataka has been forced into, the State has no choice but to reconsider its decision on clearance to the Goa-Tamner power Line, he stated in his letter.

He said the Mahadayi Water Dispute Tribunal Award was pronounced on 14 August, 2018 and published in the Gazette of India on 27 February, 2020. "Total allocation made to Karnataka is 13.42 TMC, of which 3.9 TMC of water is for diversion for drinking water purposes (1.72 TMC from Kalasa Nala and 2.18 TMC from Bandura Nala). The State government has submitted a modified pre-feasibility report of Kalasa & Bandhuri Nala Diversion scheme (Lift schemes) to CWC on 16 June, 2022 for clearances," the CM said. —*PTI*

RAISING A PITCH

Members of Anganwadi workers protest against State government at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Thursday, raising a host of demands *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

HC reserves verdict on Prajwal bail plea

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Karnataka High Court on Thursday reserved its verdict on the bail plea of ex-Janata Dal (S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who faces allegations of sexual assault and rape.

A single-judge bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna earlier heard arguments on Prajwal's application in the first case and two anticipatory bail pleas related to subsequent complaints. During the hearing, the court directed the advocates to avoid mentioning the victims' names and, instead, point out specific details in the case documents.

Senior Advocate Prabhuling K Navadgi, appearing for Prajwal, outlined the timeline of events, emphasising that the woman, who had previously complained about being illegally removed from her home, had not initially leveled allegations of sexual misconduct against Prajwal.

Navadgi stated that the allegations primarily focused on Prajwal's father and noted that the victim had worked for the family for four years.

He also raised concerns about the four-year delay in filing the complaint. —*Salar News*

Sugarcane growers to protest at CM's home

MYSURU, 19 SEPT

Members of Mysuru-Chamarajanagar District State Sugarcane Growers' Association will stage a dharna outside the residence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at Ramakrishnagar here on 30 September to raise their host of demands.

On Thursday, the sugarcane growers protested near Gun House Circle against State government, and traffic came to a grinding halt for some time due to it.

The demands raised by farmers are ensuring minimum support price (MSP) for all farm crops, increasing the MSP of sugarcane to Rs 4,000 per tonne, preventing man-animal conflict, disbursing compensation to farmers who suffered crop loss due to wild animal attacks, withdrawing the order of linking their Aadhar number to irrigation pump sets, increasing the milk price procuring by farmers and releasing pending Rs 700 crore incentives to milk producers in the State. —*Salar News*

Ensuring minimum support price for all farm crops is one of the demands raised by sugarcane growers *PHOTO: PTI*

BAN GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS, SAY FARMERS

MYSURU, 19 SEPT

Karnataka State Sugarcane Growers' Association President Kurubur Shanthakumar on Thursday urged Union and State governments to ban the usage of genetically modified (GM) crops in the large interests of people and farmers.

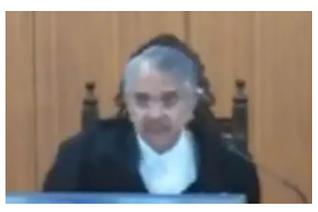
"Doctors have warned about the ill effects of GM crops on the health of people and we should boycott using such crops," Shanthakumar said.

The farmer leader also demanded Union government direct private banks and micro-finance companies to stop harassing farmers and women over the recovery of loans. He also appealed to the Centre to withdraw its order directed to Finance Ministry for auctioning the lands and properties of farmers defaulting on loans.

He also urged the government to fix Rs 4,000 per tonne as the minimum support price for sugarcane in this crushing season. Besides the government should direct all sugar mills to release Rs 150 per tonne as an incentive to sugar cane growers as it has been pending for one year. —*Salar News*

Judge faces backlash for remarks about Gori Palya

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT



Justice Srishananda *PHOTO: SALAR*

Justice Srishananda of High Court is under fire for his comments referring to the Muslim-majority locality of Gori Palya as "Pakistan" during a court hearing. The remarks, made while discussing traffic issues near the Mysore Road flyover, sparked widespread outrage on social media.

In a video that has since gone viral, Justice Srishananda stated, "Go to Mysore Road flyover, every autorickshaw has 10 people. It is not applicable because the Mysore flyover heads left for the market from Gori Palya, which is in Pakistan, not India."

Social media users were aghast as to how someone occupying a constitutional position could make such a statement, with one user writing, "A Judge of the Karnataka High Court has referred to a Muslim-majority area in Bengaluru as Pakistan. A Judge calls his country's citizens Pakistani; is there anything more shameful?" Others pointed out that such comments could further dehumanise Indian Muslims and contribute to systemic discrimination.

Critics also called for reforms in the judicial appointment process. "Like IAS/IPS/IRS, judges must be selected through a rigorous test on the Constitution, rather than through a collegium system that allows for biased selections," one user argued.

Justice Srishananda, who has served as an Additional Judge since May 2020 and became a permanent Judge in September 2021, has not yet publicly responded to the backlash. —*Salar News*

Shobha, Ashoka booked for Nagamangala clash remarks

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Cases have been registered against Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje and Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R Ashoka for allegedly making provocative statements in the aftermath of clashes between two groups during a Ganesh idol immersion procession in Nagamangala, police said on Thursday.

Two separate FIRs were registered against the BJP leaders based on a complaint filed by a 45-year-old police officer at Nagamangala town police station in Mandya district, they said.

The cases have been registered under section 192 (Wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot-if rioting be committed; if not committed) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, police said.

Shobha Karandlaje *PHOTO: PTI*

> **There is a kind of undeclared emergency in Karnataka. Siddaramaiah has become Hitler after becoming the Chief Minister**
>
> -Shobha Karandlaje, Union Minister

In an online post on 13 September, Karandlaje said: "Prathama Poojya Ganesha has been arrested by the police in Mandya, Karnataka!! Anti-nationals threw stones & sandals at the Ganesha idol during the procession & burned more than 25 shops. CM Siddaramaiah and HM (G) Parameshwar(a) are protecting the culprits and covering up the incident."

Karnataka Police on Thursday suspended the Deputy Superintendent (Dy SP) of Nagamangala Sumeeth AR for negligence and dereliction of duty in connection with the violence in Nagamangala.

The order was issued by Mandya SP Mallikarjun Baladandi.

According to police, an argument broke out between two groups, when the procession by devotees from Badri Koppalu village reached a place of worship at Nagamangala on 11 September. —*Salar News*

DALIT ACTIVISTS PROTEST AGAINST MLA PRADEEP

C'BALLAPUR, 19 SEPT

Dalit activists protested in front of Jai Bheem Hostel in Chikkaballapur on Thursdsay against Pradeep Eshwar MLA for his anti-Dalit stance.

The agitators alleged that after becoming Chikkaballapur MLA, Eshwar has not given prominence to Dalit leaders and has been suppressing them. The Congress MLA also denied a young Dalit leader a chance to contest KPCC polls.

Eshwar claimed himself as an orphan during Assembly elections 2024. He used Dalit leaders to his advantage during elections and dumped them after getting elected to the Assembly, the activists alleged. The agitators also alleged that development works have come to a standstill in Chikkaballapur and urged the legislator to treat Dalit leaders on par with other leaders. —*Salar News*

JOBS FOR KANNADIGAS

Revise Sarojini Mahishi panel report: KDA

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Kannada Development Authority (KDA) has proposed a set of recommendations to revise the proposals submitted by Dr Sarojini Mahishi Committee in 1986 on employment opportunities for Kannadigas. The government should provide legal support for implementing the recommendations aimed at ensuring employment opportunities for Kannadigas in the modern economic landscape, particularly in multinational companies, KDA President Purushottama Bilimale said.

In a meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Bilimale emphasised the necessity of aligning the original report's proposals with the realities of the 21st century.

Key sectors, such as private industries, IT firms, multinational corporations and educational institutions, were not considered in the original report as these industries were either non-existent or less significant in the 1980s when the committee was formed.

The revisions focus on making the hiring of Kannadigas mandatory for 'C' and 'D' category posts across private and public enterprises in the State. Additionally, it demands that banks operating in Karnataka ensure that only those candidates who have studied Kannada up to the 10th standard or passed a State language test be recruited for clerical roles.

The revised report also suggests that Kannada should be prioritised in all government software and communication tools and the language should be a compulsory subject from Class 1 to 10. —*Salar News*

Women protest against microfinance companies

MYSURU, 19 SEPT

- The microfinance agents not only harassed borrowers but also people who gave surety if borrowers fled homes

Members of women self groups (SHGs) and others staged 'mock hanging' protests outside gram panchayat offices in Mandya district on Thursday against microfinance companies for allegedly harassing them over recovery of loans.

More than 30 microfinance companies have distributed loans ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 3 lakh to SHG members depending upon their income generation and loan repayment capacity. The microfinance agents not only harassed borrowers but also people who gave surety if borrowers fled homes. Unable to repay the loans and feeling perturbed by the harassment, some women left their homes and some committed suicide.

The protesters wanted the intervention of the government to direct microfinancing companies to give more time for repayment of their loans and prevent forceful loan recovery by these institutions. —*Salar News*

In Haryana, BJP vows MSP & govt jobs for Agniveers

2L govt jobs, ₹2,100 monthly for women among promises

CHANDIGARH, 19 SEPT

BJP on Thursday released its manifesto for 5 October Haryana assembly polls, promising a monthly assistance of Rs 2,100 for women, two lakh government jobs for the youth and guaranteed government job for Agniveers hailing from the state.

Union minister and BJP president JP Nadda released the 'sankalp patra' in presence of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Union Ministers M L Khattar, Rao Inderjit Singh, Krishan Pal Gurjar and head of the party's poll manifesto committee, at Rohtak.

The ruling BJP in Haryana, which is eyeing to ride to power for a third consecutive term after the polls next month, also promised to purchase 24 crops at Minimum Support Price (MSP).

BJP government in Haryana was already buying 14 crops at MSP. Last month after Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini's announcement, the state cabinet gave approval to a proposal of buying 10 more crops at MSP.

Facing flak from Opposition parties over the Agnipath scheme, which is for short-term military recruitment, Nadda said there will be a guarantee of government job for every Agniveer hailing from Haryana.

Speaking on the occasion, Nadda said Haryana has marched on the path of progress during BJP-led government.

While releasing the party manifesto, Nadda hit out at the Congress and accused it of reducing poll manifestos to a diluted document .

For the grand old party the manifestos are mere formality, with which they deceive the public, he charged and added that Haryana was earlier known as land of scams.

Sports nurseries will come up in every district for the Olympic Games, the manifesto stated.

Tourism was also the focus in the manifesto with the party promising an Aravalli Jungle Safari of international level in South Haryana.

—PTI

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Union Minister and BJP National President JP Nadda release manifesto for Assembly elections, in Haryana, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

POLL PROMISES

- ₹2,100 per month to all women
- Permanent jobs for ex-Agniveers
- Free treatment up to Rs 10 lakh under Chirayu-Ayushman Yojana
- LPG cylinders for Rs 500 under Har Ghar Grihani Yojana
- Government jobs for 2 lakh locals and additional employment opportunities for 5 lakh individuals
- Construction of 5 lakh houses in both urban and rural areas
- Provision of a scooter for every college-going female student in rural regions

ART 370 RESTORATION

Pak & Congress have same agenda, intention: Shah

NEW DELHI/JAMMU, 19 SEPT

Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday latched on to Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's remarks on the restoration of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir to hit out at the Congress, accusing it of speaking the neighbouring country's language.

Shah said on X that Asif's statement in support of Article 370, which gave the erstwhile state special rights, and Article 35A, has proved that the neighbouring country and the Congress have the "same intentions and agenda".

Article 35A gave special rights and privileges to its "permanent residents".

Several BJP leaders posted Asif's remarks to a Pakistani channel that his country shared the view of the Congress-NC alliance that Article 370, which along with Article 35A, was scrapped in August 2019, should be restored. BJP general secretary Tarun Chugh, who is in charge of the party's affairs in Jammu and Kashmir, claimed the Opposition alliance is running a Pakistani agenda in the ongoing polls. Shah said the Pakistan defence minister's statement has once "again exposed" the opposition party.

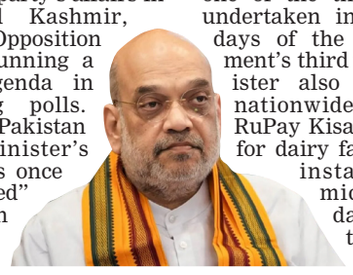
He claimed that the tune of Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi's party and Pakistan has always been the same and the Congress has always been "hand in glove with the anti-national forces".

"Pakistan defence minister's statement about the Congress and the JKNC's support on Article 370 and 35A has once again exposed the Congress. This statement has once again made it clear that the Congress and Pakistan have the same intentions and agenda.

Shah launches 'White Revolution 2.0' to boost dairy sector In a major push to transform India's dairy cooperative sector, Union Minister Amit Shah on Thursday unveiled 'White Revolution 2.0', a comprehensive initiative aimed at empowering women farmers and creating job opportunities.

The programme focuses on four key areas - empowering women farmers, enhancing local milk production, strengthening dairy infrastructure, and boosting dairy exports. The programme is one of the three initiatives undertaken in the first 100 days of the Modi government's third term. The minister also launched the nationwide rollout of RuPay Kisan Credit Cards for dairy farmers and the installation of micro-ATMs at dairy cooperative societies.

—PTI



Farooq: Release of terrorists behind J&K terror

JAMMU, 19 SEPT

National Conference (NC) Chief Farooq Abdullah on Thursday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying the release of terrorists in exchange for Rubaiya Sayeed in 1989 and Indian Airlines plane in Afghanistan in 1999 are responsible for the growth of terrorism in the region.

Abdullah was replying to PM Modi's speech in an election rally at Srinagar earlier in the day accusing NC, Congress and People's Democratic Party (PDP) for "destruction" of Jammu and Kashmir. He said the people should be thankful that the NC was there in 1947 at the time of Partition otherwise the Muslim majority state would have become a part of Pakistan.

Asked about the statement of the prime minister in Srinagar accusing the three families – NC, Congress and PDP – for destroying Jammu and Kashmir, Abdullah asked who released hardcore terrorists at Kandahar, Afghanistan in December 1999 in exchange for the hijacked 814 Indian Airlines plane and for abducted Rubaiya Sayeed. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Hearing of RaGa's defamation case moved to 21 Sept

SULTANPUR, 19 SEPT

The hearing in the MP-MLA court here in a case of defamation against Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi was on Thursday postponed due to unavailability of the complainant's lawyer. Plaintiff Vijay Mishra's advocate Santosh Kumar Pandey cited several cases scheduled in different courts on Thursday, and sought additional time, which the court of special judge Shubham Verma accepted. The next hearing has now been set for 21 September. *—PTI*

SP MLA surrenders in court after son held in suicide case

BHADOHI, 19 SEPT

Samajwadi Party MLA from Bhadohi Zahid Beg, accused of abetting suicide and violating child labour laws, surrendered in a local court on Thursday and was sent to judicial custody for 14 days. "I have been assaulted by policemen. I am not a goonda or a hooligan. I do not know on whose directions and why all this is being done," Beg claimed as he was being taken to a police van from the court. Purported videos on social media and TV channels showed the MLA was barefoot when he went to the court, having lost his slippers during a commotion on the crowded premises. *—PTI*

Odisha BJP govt completes 100 days in office

BHUBANESWAR, 19 SEPT

As Odisha's first BJP government completes 100 days in power on Thursday, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will present his ministry's report card at a function in Puri later in the day. To celebrate the occasion, an event has been organised at the temple town to "make the state government accessible to people," said Odisha BJP chief Manmohan Samal. During the meeting, Majhi will outline his government's achievements over the past 100 days and discuss the fulfillment of promises made during the election campaign. *—PTI*

Docs allege pressure as tents, fans removed from protest site

KOLKATA, 19 SEPT

Agitating junior doctors on Thursday alleged that decorators were removing tents, bamboo shafts and pedestal fans from the protest site in front of Swasthya Bhawan after they were allegedly pressurised by the police to do so.

The police, however, denied these allegations as baseless.

The agitating doctors said that around midnight, decorators, who had themselves donated tarpaulin, beds, tents and pedestal fans, were seen removing those from the sit-in site outside the state health department headquarters in Salt Lake.

West Bengal minister and senior TMC leader Swapan Debnath has stirred a controversy by saying that parents should monitor what their daughters do during the 'Reclaim the night' movement held after midnight, while citing an alleged incident of a protestor consuming liquor with men during one such agitation. The ruling Trinamool Congress, however, sought to distance itself from the remarks made by the minister.

The talks between junior doctors and officials of the state government on Wednesday night failed to resolve the impasse between the two sides. Doctors alleged that the state refused to provide written minutes of the meeting and announced they will continue with their agitation and 'cease work' movement till the government issues written directives on safety and security concerns of doctors in state-run hospitals as agreed in the meeting.

TMC, CPI(M) leader appears before CBI & ED

West Bengal state secretary of DYFI, Minakshi Mukherjee, appeared before the CBI's Salt Lake office on Thursday. TMC MLA Sudipto Roy also appeared before ED for questioning in a money-laundering case linked to alleged financial irregularities. *—PTI*

TMC's Sircar quits RS

New Delhi, 19 Sept

Jawhar Sircar, who had questioned the TMC government in West Bengal over steps taken after the Kolkata rape-murder incident, on Thursday resigned from his Rajya Sabha membership. According to official sources, Rajya Sabha chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar has accepted his resignation. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

'SWACHH, SWASTH AUR VIKSIT'

President Droupadi Murmu sweeps Mahakaleshwar Temple, in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, on Thursday and calls for efforts to make India clean, healthy and developed **PHOTO: PTI**

Tharoor to head Parl panel on external affairs

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor will head the parliamentary standing committee on external affairs and veteran leader Digvijaya Singh will head the panel on education, party sources said.

Former Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi will lead the parliamentary standing committee on agriculture and Koraput MP Saptagiri Ulaka will head the panel on rural development.

Channi, who is a Dalit, and Ulaka, who hails from a tribal community, were chosen by the party with social justice being the centrepiece of all recent appointments.

Congress has forwarded the names of the four leaders to head the four department-related parliamentary standing committees. *—PTI*

Terror threat from ISIS, Al-Qaeda in J&K: FATF

SRINAGAR, 19 SEPT

The "most significant" terrorism threat faced by India appears to be from the ISIS or Al-Qaeda-linked groups that are active in and around Jammu and Kashmir, the FATF said on Thursday in its report for the country on combatting money-laundering and terror-financing crimes.

The 368-page report also made a mention of the recent situation in Manipur, which is witnessing ethnic violence for more than a year now, leading to over 220 deaths.

It said a "sudden rise" in terrorist-financing (TF) investigations was seen in 2023 and this was attributed to events arising out of incidents in Manipur that led to such probes in more than 50 cases.

The FATF said India has suffered from the effects of terrorism consistently since the country achieved independence in 1947.

"India faces a disparate range of terrorism threats, categorised by India into six different theatres.

"These can be summarised as theatres associated with ISIL or AQ-linked extremist groups active in and around Jammu and Kashmir, whether directly or via proxies or affiliates, as well as other separatist movements in the region; other ISIL and AQ cells, their affiliates, or radicalised individuals in India," it said.

The Paris-headquartered global body, which leads action and finalises recommendations to combat terror financing and money laundering, said regional insurgencies in the northeast and north of India and left-wing extremist groups seeking to overthrow the government are the other terrorist threats. *—PTI*

EAM, Ukraine FM discuss solution to end conflict

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday held a phone conversation with newly-appointed Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha with a focus on boosting bilateral ties and finding a solution to the conflict in Ukraine.

The conversation came nearly a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-profile trip to Kyiv. "I spoke with Subrahmanyam Jaishankar to build on Narendra Modi's historic visit to Kyiv and talks with Zelenskyy," Sybiha said. "We agreed to take our bilateral relations forward in all promising areas of cooperation. We exchanged views ahead of UNGA and coordinated next steps in political dialogue," he said after the talks.

In a post on X, Jaishankar said he was looking forward to working with the Ukrainian foreign minister.

"Spoke with the new Ukrainian FM @andrii_sybiha today. Congratulated him on his appointment. Look forward to working with him," he said. It is learnt that the Russia-Ukraine conflict figured in the talks. In his talks with Zelenskyy, Modi said both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the ongoing war and that India was ready to play an "active role" to restore peace in the region.

Modi said India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict and he would even like to contribute personally for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. *—PTI*

S Jaishankar **PHOTO: PTI**

Mukesh Ahlawat new face in Atishi's Cabinet: AAP

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

AAP MLA Mukesh Ahlawat will be the new face in the Delhi Cabinet headed by Atishi, who will be sworn in as chief minister on 21 September, and four ministers will be retained, the party said on Thursday.

Chief Minister-designate Atishi and her new Cabinet will take the oath of office on the same day.

AAP said ministers Gopal Rai, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Kailash Gahlot and Imran Hussain will continue to be part of the Cabinet.

Ahlawat, MLA from Delhi's Sultanpur Majra, has been inducted to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of social welfare minister Raaj Kumar Anand. Anand resigned from the Kejriwal government and quit the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in April.

The Council of Ministers of the Delhi government has seven members, including the chief minister. The tenure of the new chief minister and the new entrant will be brief as Delhi assembly polls are due in February next year.

Mukesh Ahlawat **PHOTO: FB**

Kejri to join AAP's Jagadhri roadshow in

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal will join the party's campaign in poll-bound Haryana with a roadshow in the Jagadhri constituency on 20 September, AAP general secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak said on Thursday.

He will also participate in 13 events across 11 districts, covering the Dabwali, Rania, Bhiwani, Meham, Kalayat, Assandh and Ballabhgarh constituencies, among others, in the coming days, Pathak said. *—PTI*

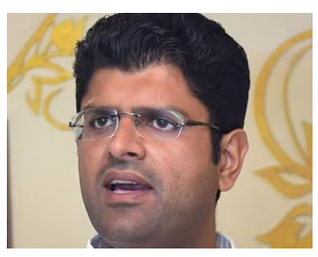
RIVALS IN UCHANA KALAN

2 political families set to clash in Haryana

UCHANA KALAN, 19 SEPT

Haryana's Uchana Kalan, a Jat-dominated constituency and major battleground for the 5 October assembly polls, will witness the clash of two prominent political families with well-known rivalry -- former deputy PM Devi Lal's great-grandson Dushyant Singh Chautala and former Union minister Birender Singh's son Brijendra Singh.

Former Haryana deputy chief minister and Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) leader Dushyant Singh Chautala, the sitting MLA from the constituency, is seeking a re-election. He is the grandson of former Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala.



Dushyant Singh Chautala **PHOTO: PTI**

Up against Dushyant Chautala is bureaucrat-turned-politician and Congress candidate Brijendra Singh. He and his father Birender Singh quit BJP earlier this year and joined the Congress. Birender Singh, the grandson of farmer leader Sir Chhotu Ram, had joined the BJP ahead of the Haryana polls in 2014, snapping his over four-decade-old ties with the Congress.

Before Dushyant Chautala won the Uchana Kalan assembly seat, it was considered a bastion of the Birender Singh family. The former Union minister himself was a five-time MLA from the constituency. Brijendra Singh, however, does not see Dushyant Chautala as his main political opponent from Uchana Kalan. "The main contest is with the BJP," he asserted.

The ruling BJP in the state has named Devender Chatar Bhuj Attri as its candidate for the Uchana Kalan seat.

Dushyant Chautala won the seat in 2019, defeating Brijendra's mother Prem Lata Singh by over 47,000 votes. Prem Lata had defeated Chautala in 2014. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Stones hurled at Ganesha idol in M'rashtra, 15 held

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 19 SEPT

Police have arrested 15 people for allegedly pelting stones at a Ganesha festival procession in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar city, an official said on Thursday. Three women and two men were injured in the incident which took place in Pundaliknagar area at around 11.30 pm on Tuesday, the final day of the Ganesh festival, he said. Some members of a Ganesh mandal threw 'gulal' (vermillion powder) on persons representing another mandal, leading to a quarrel among them. Members of one Ganesh Mandal allegedly hurled stones on a procession of the other mandal, a police release said. After receiving information, police personnel, including a SRPF team, reached the area and apprehended four people from the spot. —*PTI*

1 killed in firecracker factory explosion in TN

HYDERBAD, 19 SEPT

An autorickshaw driver, G. Govindaraj ,29, from Sevalpatti, tragically lost his life, and a worker, P. Gurumoorthi ,19, from Sivakasi, was critically injured following a fire at the Sri Lakshmi Fireworks unit in Sevalpatti, within the Vembakottai police station limits in Virudhunagar district, Tamil Nadu, on Thursday. According to police reports, the incident occurred around 9.45am when Govindaraj was unloading materials from his vehicle. An explosion in the chemical-filling room caused the fireworks shed to collapse, trapping Govindaraj under the debris and killing him instantly. Rescue teams arrived promptly, extinguished the flames, and recovered his body. —*Agencies*

Didi alleges conspiracy behind WB floods

KOLKATA, 19 SEPT

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday accused the Centre of failing to carry out dredging at the DVC dams, which released water resulting in floods in several districts of the state. Banerjee held the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) accountable for the "man-made" floods and suggested there was a conspiracy behind the situation in the state. DVC dams are located at Maithon and Panchet, both along the Jharkhand-Bengal border. "This is not rainwater, it is water released by the central government organisation DVC from its dams. Why isn't the central government dredging the DVC dams, where the water storage capacity has decreased by 36 per cent," she added.—*PTI*

Centre to share info with SC on Collegium

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Centre on Thursday told the Supreme Court that it will be providing some details next week concerning the collegium's recommendations on the appointment of chief justices in several high courts in the country. The submissions to this effect were made by Attorney General R Venkataramani before a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud while seeking an adjournment of the hearing on a PIL which is listed for hearing on Friday. "I will be providing some details about the collegium's recommendations. Please list the plea (which is listed on Friday) after a week," the top law officer told the bench which also comprised justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra. The bench said the submissions for the adjournment can be made on Friday itself as the matter is already on board. —*PTI*

21 thatched houses of dalits torched in Bihar, 15 arrested

The houses were allegedly burnt by mafia to usurp land

NAWADA, 19 SEPT

Around 21 thatched houses belonging to the Scheduled Castes Ravidas and Manjhi in Bihar's Nawada district were set on fire allegedly by a group of people belonging to another Scheduled Caste Paswan, on Wednesday evening. Preliminary investigations indicate that a land dispute may have triggered the incident. There are no casualities.

The houses at Krishna Nagar Mahadalit settlements were set on fire allegedly by a land mafia in a bid to usurp vacant government land

Nawada District Magistrate Ashutosh Kumar Verma said, "The district police has arrested 15 people for allegedly torching the houses. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to investigate further, and searches are ongoing to apprehend the remaining suspects."

"We are providing relief materials, including food packets and drinking water, to those displaced. Temporary tents have been set up for the victims," he noted. The DM refuted claims that cattle were charred, saying, "No evidence has been found to support that."

A fire burns after multiple houses were allegedly set ablaze, in Nawada district, Bihar, late Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

Police claimed that shots were fired in the air during the arson.

Meanwhile, Congress party on Thursday slammed the NDA government over the incident saying it is another proof of the "jungle raj" prevailing in the state and shows the dispensation's "utter indifference" towards Dalits and the deprived.

"The terror of goons on Mahadalit Tola in Bihar's Nawada is another proof of the jungle raj of NDA's double engine government," Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post in Hindi on X.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the incident of "burning down more than 80 houses of Mahadalits" in Nawada, Bihar is extremely horrific and condemnable.

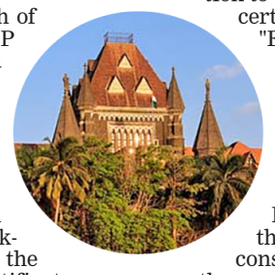
"Firing dozens of rounds and creating terror on such a large scale and rendering people homeless shows that the law and order situation in the state has completely collapsed," she said on X. Union Minister Chirag Paswan condemned the incident. "This is a sad incident. It is condemnable and also shameful. I am in touch with the state government. First of all, it is necessary to ensure that those who have been affected should be rehabilitated and injured can be treated," Food Processing Minister Chirag Paswan told reporters on the sidelines of World Food India 2024 event being held here. —*PTI*

"CAN'T CENSOR CREATIVITY'

Decide on 'Emergency' by 25 Sept: HC to CBFC

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

The Bombay High Court on Thursday said creative freedom and the freedom of expression cannot be curtailed and the censor board cannot refuse to certify a film just because there is an apprehension of a law and order problem.



A division bench of Justices BP Colabawalla and Firdosh Pooniwalla expressed its displeasure with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for not taking a decision on the issuance of a certificate to Kangana Ranaut-starrer film "Emergency", and ordered for the decision to be taken by 25 September.

It asked if the CBFC thinks the people of this country are so naive to believe everything that is shown in a movie.

On the petitioner's claim that the CBFC was delaying issuance of certificate to the movie due to political reasons, the HC noted the film's co-producer Ranaut was herself a sitting BJP parliamentarian and questioned if the ruling party was acting against its own MP.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Zee Entertainment Enterprises, seeking a direction to the CBFC to issue a certificate for the film "Emergency".

The court had said it cannot grant any urgent relief at this stage in wake of the directive issued by the Madhya Pradesh HC asking the censor board to consider objections to the movie before certifying it.

The bench had then directed the censor board to take its decision on issuance of the certificate to the film by 18 September.

The bench noted the CBFC had not complied with its earlier order and had simply passed the buck from one department to another. —*PTI*

Jani Master held in Goa after being charged with POCSO

HYDERABAD, 19 SEPT

Well-known dance choreographer Jani Master, who has been accused of sexual assault by a woman who worked with him, was arrested, police said on Thursday.

Jani Master, whose real name is Shaik Jani, was arrested in Goa by the Hyberabad police where he will be produced before a local court, a senior police official told PTI.

He will be brought to Hyderabad after obtaining a transit warrant from the Goa court.

The Cyberabad police has registered a case against Jani Master after the woman alleged sexual assault by him during outdoor shoots.

The Raidurgam police registered a zero FIR based on her complaint and transferred it to the Narsingi police station on Sunday night as she resides there.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

According to police, a case was also registered under the Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act against the accused.

Meanwhile, a panel formed by the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce has also launched a probe into allegations of sexual harassment against Jani Master.

The Telangana State Commission for Women chairperson Nerella Sharada on Wednesday said the complainant in the case approached the Commission. She said orders would be issued to provide police protection to her. The Commission would also extend necessary help, on behalf of the panel, to her, Sharada said.

The issue also assumed political colour with Telangana BJP Mahila Morcha issuing a statement that the party considers it a "Love Jihad" case.

The Jana Sena party led by Pawan Kalyan has asked Jani Master to stay away from its programmes in view of the case registered against him. —*PTI*

'WORK-STRESS'

EY employee death: Govt to probe unsafe work culture

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Ministry of Labour & Employment is investigating alleged "unsafe and exploitative work environment" days after the tragic demise of Anna Sebastian Perayil who worked with S R Batliboi, a member firm of EY Global.

Perayil was a 26-year-old chartered accountant (CA) who died allegedly due to extreme work pressure at the firm.

"Deeply saddened by the tragic loss of Anna Sebastian Perayil. A thorough investigation into the allegations of an unsafe and exploitative work environment is underway. We are committed to ensuring justice & LabourMinistry has officially taken up the complaint," Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje Thursday said on X.

EY on Wednesday issued a statement stating, "We are deeply saddened by Anna Sebastian's tragic and untimely passing in July 2024."

Anna Sebastian Perayil, who passed her CA exams in 2023, worked at EY Pune office for four months before she succumbed. Her mother this month wrote to EY India Chairman Rajiv Memani flagging the "glorification" of overwork at the multinational consulting firm.

EY in a statement said that while no measure can compensate for the loss the firm has provided all the assistance and will continue to do so. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Anticipatory bail in NDPS Act case very serious: SC

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Granting anticipatory bail in a case registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act is a "very serious" issue and "unheard of", the Supreme Court said on Thursday.

A bench headed by Justice B R Gavai and also comprising Justices Aravind Kumar and K V Viswanathan was hearing a plea filed by an accused seeking regular bail in a case lodged for alleged offences under provisions of the NDPS Act in West Bengal.

The bench directed the West Bengal government to consider whether the state proposes to file an application seeking cancellation of anticipatory bail granted to four accused in a case.

It issued notice to the state of West Bengal on the accused's bail plea and posted it for hearing after four weeks.

The petitioner's counsel told the bench that four of the six accused in the case were granted pre-arrest bail while one of them was on regular bail.

"In NDPS matter, anticipatory bail?" the bench wondered. "In NDPS matter, anticipatory bail is unheard of," it said. —*PTI*

SC rejects telecom firms' plea in AGR case

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

In a jolt to telecom firms, the Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas filed by companies, including Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel, seeking correction of alleged errors in the Adjusted Gross Revenue.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai also rejected the plea of telcos seeking to list the curative petitions for open court hearing.

A curative petition is the last legal recourse in the apex court and is generally considered in-chamber unless a prima facie case is made out for reconsideration of the verdict.

"Application for listing the Curative Petitions in open Court is rejected. We have gone through the Curative Petitions and the connected documents. In our opinion, no case is made out within the parameters indicated in the decision of this court in Rupa Ashok Hurra v Ashok Hurra. The Curative Petitions are dismissed," the bench observed in an order dated 30 August, which was uploaded on Thursday.

On 9 October last year, the top court had taken note of submissions of some telecommunication companies seeking listing of their pleas on Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) due issue.

The telcos had referred to alleged errors in the arithmetic calculation for arriving at the AGR-related dues by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

In July 2021, the Supreme Court dismissed a plea seeking correction of errors in the demand of AGR dues. The telecom companies had moved the top court claiming there were several errors in arriving at the AGR dues which totalled over Rs 1 lakh crore.

Vodafone-Idea's total liability was Rs 58,254 crore and Bharti Airtel's Rs 43,980 crore. Earlier, the top court had given the telecom companies 10 years to clear their outstanding dues to the government.

The top court held that the demand raised by the DoT witha respect to AGR dues would be final. It also said that telecom companies shall not raise any dispute and there shall not be any re-assessment. —*PTI*

Pakistan urges India to honour provisions of Indus Water Treaty

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

- India also cited the impact of persistent cross border terrorism as one of the reasons for demanding the review

Responding to India's formal notice seeking a review of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) Pakistan on Thursday said it considers the agreement "important" and hoped that New Delhi will also comply with the provisions of the bilateral pact signed exactly 64 years ago.

India on 30 August served a formal notice to Pakistan seeking a review of the agreement citing "fundamental and unforeseen" changes in the circumstances and impact of the persistent cross-border terrorism, government sources in New Delhi said on Wednesday.

IWT was signed by India and Pakistan on 19 September, 1960, after nine years of negotiations with the sole aim of managing six trans-boundary rivers in the basin.

One of the major agreements between India and Pakistan, the IWT has stood the test of time and has been adhered to despite wars and tensions between the two neighbours.

Pakistan receives the entire flow from the three western rivers, Chenab, Jhelum and Indus, while India has complete rights over the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers. India also cited the impact of cross border terrorism as one of the reasons for demanding the review. It was the second time in over one-and-half years that India issued a notice to Pakistan seeking modification of the IWT. —*PTI*

Should we send Bishnoi: Salman's dad gets threat

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

A man and a burqa-clad woman allegedly threatened noted screenwriter Salim Khan, father of Bollywood actor Salman Khan, citing jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi's name in Mumbai's Bandra area, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place when Khan was sitting at the Bandra Bandstand promenade after his morning walk on Wednesday, following which the police detained the accused duo, an official said.

During their investigation, they told the police that they were playing mischief with Khan, he said.

"A man and a burqa-clad woman going on a two-wheeler spotted Salim Khan sitting at the Bandstand promenade and came near him after taking a U-turn. They stopped close to him and asked him 'Lawrence Bishnoi ko bheju kya?' (Should we send Lawrence Bishnoi to you?)," the official said.

"We launched a probe and detained both the accused persons. During their investigation, they told us that they were playing mischief," Khan's bodyguard said. —*PTI*

Salim Khan with son and actor Salman Khan PHOTO: PTI

A FIRST FOR INDIA

Women 50% of workforce at Kerala's liquor outlets

T'PURAM, 19 SEPT

Shattering glass ceilings and defying long-held social taboos, women now make up over 50 per cent of the workforce at Kerala State Beverages Corporation known as BEVCO, the state-run liquor retailer.

In what might be a first for India, Kerala has positioned women salespersons at liquor outlets, a job they view as no different from any other government role.

"Initially, I was very worried, as we all considered it a problem. But after six months of working, I started enjoying the job, and we hardly encountered any problems," Leena, a woman salesperson employed in a KSBC outlet in Thiruvananthapuram for the last two years, told PTI.

According to the women, long working hours is the only problem PHOTO: PTI

"Ten years ago, women went to court and won their rights to work in BEVCO. Earlier, women were not recruited to work in liquor outlets, and the court directed the government to recruit women as well," Harshita Attaluri, IPS, Managing Director of KSBC, told PTI.

"Our only problem is the long working hours. We find most of the customers who come to our outlets as friendly and cooperative," Sangeetha , another salesperson, said.

- Now, more and more women are coming forward to take the competitive examination to get a job at BEVCO

For Vineetha, a cashier at a liquor outlet, this is just like any other job.

"The concepts we had about liquor shops and the consumers who come here are all wrong. We are working happily here, though long working hours are a problem," Vineetha said.

Now, more and more women are coming forward to take the competitive examination to get a job at BEVCO. —*PTI*

Google's plea against CCI mentioned in SC

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Google LLC on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the arguments in the case related to the tech giant's alleged anti-competitive practices in the Android mobile device matter may take five-six days.

On 29 March last year, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) had handed out a mixed verdict on Google's alleged anti-competitive practices in the case -- upholding a fine of Rs 1,338 crore but scrapping conditions like allowing hosting of third-party app stores on its Play Store.

The top court is seized of cross-pleas of Google and the Competition Commission of India (CCI) challenging a verdict of an appellate tribunal in a case related to the tech giant's alleged anti-competitive practices in the Android mobile device matter.

PHOTO: X

The NCLAT had upheld the fine imposed by the CCI on the tech giant . On 20 October, 2022, the CCI had imposed a penalty of Rs 1,337.76 crore on Google for anti-competitive practices in relation to Android mobile devices. The regulator had also ordered the internet major to cease and desist from various unfair business practices. —*PTI*

OUT OF CONTROL

Around 49,400 acres of vegetation have burned in the region, south of Porto, in Portugal since Monday due to deadly wildfires. In the after math of it, hundreds of people were forced to evacuate their homes. Meanwhile, three firefighters died when their vehicle weretrapped by the flames
PHOTO: X

Will the new attacks ignite Israel-Hezbollah war?

At least 20 people were killed in Lebanon after hand-held radios or walkie talkies used by militant group Hezbollah exploded in multiple parts of the country. Also the alleged Israeli attack on members of Hezbollah via their pagers is another ominous development propelling the Middle East towards a full-scale regional war. It leaves Hezbollah with little option but to retaliate with the full support of the Iran-led "axis of resistance".

The sophistication and impact of targeting the pagers is unprecedented. The attack resulted in at least 11 deaths, including some of Hezbollah's fighters, and up to 3,000 people wounded.

The main aim of the attack, which US officials have reportedly said was carried out by Israel, was intended to disrupt Hezbollah's means of communication and its command and control system in Lebanon.

Since Hezbollah has reduced the use of mobile phones by its forces because Israel can easily detect and target them, pagers have increasingly become the preferred messaging device within the group.

The attack may have also been designed to cause panic within the group and among the Lebanese public, many of whom do not support Hezbollah, given the political divisions in the country.

Since Hamas' 7 October ttacks on southern Israel, the Israeli leadership under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said it is determined to remove the threat of Hezbollah, which has operated in solidarity with Hamas.

Hours before the pager attack, Netanyahu's government clarified that Israel's war goals would expand to include a return of the tens of thousands of residents to their homes in northern Israel, which they have fled due to constant rocket fire from Hezbollah. Israel's Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, said the only way to do this was through military action.

Since Hezbollah has reduced the use of mobile phones by its forces because Israel can easily detect and target them, pagers and walkie-talkeis have become the preferred messaging device ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

Hezbollah has already declared it will retaliate. What form this will take remains to be seen. The group has a massive military capability to not only to pound northern Israel with drones and missiles, but also attack other parts of the Jewish state, including heavily populated cities such as Tel Aviv.

Hezbollah showed this capability in its 2006 war with Israel. The war lasted 34 days, during which 165 Israelis were killed (121 IDF soldiers and 44 civilians) and Israel's economy and tourist industry were markedly damaged. Hezbollah and Lebanese losses were far greater, with at least 1,100 deaths. However, IDF failed to destroy or incapacitate the group.

Any successful retaliatory attack on Israel's cities could result in serious civilian casualties, giving Israel a further pretext to pursue its long-held aim of destroying Hezbollah and punishing its main backer, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In a wider conflict, the United States is committed to defending Israel, while Iran would support Hezbollah in whatever way necessary. If Israeli and US leaders think Iran will continue to refrain from any action that could propel it into war with Israel and the US, they are mistaken.

Tehran has invested heavily in Hezbollah , along with other regional affiliates – Iraqi militias, the Yemeni Houthis and the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, in particular. The aim of this "axis of resistance" has been to build a strong deterrent against Israel and the US.

Ever since its foundation 45 years ago, the Iranian regime has viewed Israel and its main backer, the US, as an existential threat, just as Israel has regarded Iran in the same way. For this, the regime has reoriented its foreign relations towards America's major adversaries, especially Russia and China. Russo-Iranian military cooperation has grown so strong, in fact, that Moscow will have little hesitation in backing Iran and its affiliates in any war.

To guard against it, Iran has developed its own nuclear program to the threshold level of developing a weapon. Iranian leaders may have also gained Russia's assurances it would help defend Iran should Israel resort to the use of its nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, it is important to remember that after nearly a year of demolishing Gaza, Israel has not been able to wipe out Hamas. It has constantly forced Gazans to relocate so IDF soldiers can operate in areas they had previously declared to be cleared of fighters. The task of defeating Hezbollah and its backers would be a far greater objective to achieve. The pager attack is just the latest in a string of operations that keeps imperilling any chances of a permanent Gaza ceasefire that could stabilise the region and contribute to the causes of peace rather than war.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

SALAR سالار

'Climate crisis pushes kids into hunger, disease'

Climate change is already having a devastating impact on children's health around the world and the situation is expected to worsen in the coming years unless urgent action is taken. The latest Goalkeepers Report by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has warned that climate change could push an additional 40 million children to stunting and 28 million more to wasting between 2024 and 2050.

The report, titled A Race to Nourish a Warming World, was released 17 September, 2024 and outlined the dire consequences of climate change on global child health. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and changes in rainfall patterns are all contributing to food insecurity, malnutrition, and disease.

The Goalkeepers Report is an annual paper published by the foundation that focuses on global development challenges and progress made towards achieving the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The 2024 report highlighted how rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns and more frequent extreme weather events are disrupting food production systems, particularly in vulnerable regions. These disruptions are exacerbating existing food insecurity and malnutrition, leading to a vicious cycle of poverty and poor health.

Climate change would, therefore, lead to a surge in stunting, where children failed to reach their full physical and mental potential and wasting, which caused emaciation and developmental delays. In 2023, 148 million children suffered from stunting and 45 million were affected by wasting, according to the World Health Organization. These numbers were expected to rise drastically unless global efforts to address malnutrition were scaled up.

The world's worst child health crisis is malnutrition. Climate change is making it even harder to solve

The report called for a global effort to address the root causes of hunger, including poverty, inequality and climate change. Key recommendations include:

- Investing in climate-smart agriculture: Supporting farmers in adopting practices that can improve yields while reducing their environmental impact.
- Strengthening social protection systems: Providing safety nets to vulnerable populations, particularly those affected by climate-related disasters.
- Improving nutrition: Ensuring that children have access to nutritious food and healthcare.
- Accelerating progress on gender equality: Empowering women and girls, who play a crucial role in food production and nutrition.

The report highlighted innovative tools that were already making an impact, including new agricultural technologies that had the potential to prevent 109 million cases of child stunting by 2050 in countries like India, Kenya and Nigeria. Additionally, efforts to fortify basic food items such as salt and bouillon cubes with essential vitamins and minerals were helping reduce cases of anaemia and neural tube defects in countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria.

Prenatal vitamins and other micronutrient supplements were also identified as cost-effective interventions, with the potential to save half a million lives and improve outcomes for millions of babies by 2040. Recent research into the microbiome — suggested that better gut health could further revolutionise malnutrition treatment, offering hope for even more comprehensive solutions in the future.

The unequal distribution of foreign aid as a critical challenge was also highlighted by the paper. Since 2010, the percentage of foreign aid going to Africa had decreased to 25 per cent from 40 per cent, despite the continent bearing the brunt of the global child health crisis. This reduction came at a time when inflation, debt crises and geopolitical conflicts had increased the strain on governments' budgets, leaving vulnerable populations more exposed to malnutrition and disease.

However, the report also underscored the progress made through innovative approaches. One example cited was the success of new agricultural technologies that had already begun transforming food production in countries like India and Kenya. These technologies had shown promise in boosting milk production and improving the nutritional quality of staple crops, directly reducing rates of child stunting.

—Courtesy, DowntoEarth

The report highlights how rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns and frequent extreme weather events are disrupting food production systems, particularly in vulnerable regions ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Why is Nipah virus a recurring, deadly threat in Kerala

The Nipah virus caused the death of a 24-year-old in Kerala, authorities reported on 16 September it was the second fatality after a teenager died from a Nipah infection in July.

Nipah is most common in fruit bats, which live in wooded areas close to the highly populated state of Kerala. It's also found in pigs.

Humans can pick up an infection from animals either directly, through droplets, or indirectly via contaminated surfaces. Human-to-human transmission is also possible. An infection can trigger encephalitis and lead to mild to severe illness, but also death.

The World Health Organization classifies Nipah as a priority pathogen, which means it has the potential to trigger an epidemic.

How is it transmitted?

Nipah virus is commonly found in fruit bats (Pteropodidae), which feed on nectar and pollen, as opposed to vampire bats which eat insects and drink the blood of animals. Fruit bats are much bigger and use their eyes, and not ultrasound, to orient themselves.

Straw-colored Fruit Bats hang from a treeStraw-colored Fruit Bats hang from a tree

Nipah virus is commonly found in fruit bats, though scientists don't really know how the virus is transmitted to humans.

- Nipah virus was first discovered in 1998 in the Malaysian village of Sungai Nipah. Febrile encephalitis — an illness caused by the virus entering the brain — and, in some cases, severe respiratory infections

Scientists still don't conclusively know how the virus is transmitted from fruit bats to pigs, cattle or even humans. However, there are indications that both humans and animals can get infected by coming in contact with the contaminated saliva and urine of fruit bats.

The 2018 outbreak in Kerala was probably due to the contamination of a drinking water source. Dead fruit bats were later found in a well belonging to the house of an infected family in Changaroth. First, many of the family members fell ill. Later, their acquaintances also got sick.

Why is the virus so dangerous?

The Nipah virus aggressively inflames the brain. The US Centers for Disease Control cites an incubation period of five days to two weeks. Symptoms are flu: fever, nausea and severe headache. Some patients experience respiratory problems. Later, disorientation, dizziness and confusion follow.Within one to two days, patients can slip into a coma and die. The mortality rate for Nipah disease is 70 per cent.

Nipah virus is commonly found in fruit bats which feed on nectar and pollen as opposed to vampire bats which eat insects and drink the blood of animals ***PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PTI***

How can the disease be treated?

There is no vaccination or medication against the Nipah virus — neither for animals, nor for humans. Medications have so far only been able to alleviate the symptoms.

In principle, patients have to be immediately isolated and taken to an intensive care unit, where vital body functions can be supported.

Contact persons or suspected cases have to be quarantined to stop the spread of the infectious disease.

Where does the Nipah virus come from?

Nipah virus was first discovered in 1998 in the Malaysian village of Sungai Nipah. Febrile encephalitis — an illness caused by the virus entering the brain — and, in some cases, severe respiratory infections were observed in 229 individuals.

Men who worked in slaughterhouses were the first to catch the infection. It became apparent that one could contract the disease from animals.

Around the same time, a comparatively mild outbreak of a respiratory infection caused by an unknown pathogen was observed in pigs in Malaysia.

Only later did scientists find that the workers and the pigs had been infected by the same virus.

As a precaution, more than 1 million pigs — half the country's total pig population — were culled in Malaysia.

Since then, cases of the virus have been reported in Bangladesh in 2001 and 2003, and in Kerala in 2018, 2021 and 2023.

—DW India

Relentless fighting devastating Sudan, UN confirms

UNITED NATIONS, 19 SEPT

Relentless violence has devastated Sudan and large-scale fighting has escalated in and around the only capital in Sudan's western Darfur region not held by paramilitary forces, the United Nations top humanitarian official said Wednesday.

Acting humanitarian chief Joyce Msuya told the UN Security Council that famine has already struck Zamzam camp, about 15 kilometres from North Darfur's embattled capital of El Fasher. She said a large-scale humanitarian operation is "a matter of life and death."

Sudan plunged into conflict in mid-April 2023, when long-simmering tensions between its military and paramilitary leaders broke out in the capital Khartoum and spread to other regions including Darfur. The UN says over 14,000 people have been killed and 33,000 injured.

Msuya urged the council to demand that the warring government and paramilitary

- Acting humanitarian chief Joyce Msuya said that famine has already struck Zamzam camp, about 15 kilometres from North Darfur's embattled capital of El Fasher

Rapid Support Force refrain from targeting civilians, hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure, and allow unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid through all border crossings and across conflict lines. Two decades ago, Darfur became synonymous with genocide and war crimes, particularly by the notorious Janjaweed Arab militias, against populations that identify as Central or East African. Up to 3,00,000 people were killed and 2.7 million were driven from their homes.

Msuya said "the world should not abide in El Fasher the atrocities we witnessed in West Darfur." Msuya said, both sides ignored the call, and fighting escalated in the past week with "constant and heavy" shelling and bombing. "About 34 per cent of the children are malnourished, including 10 per cent who are severely malnourished," Msuya said.

Aid deliveries have been impeded by fighting and flooding, but Msuya said that as floodwaters subside in the coming weeks, the UN will be able to start moving food and other assistance to El Fasher and other areas at risk of famine. *—AP*

At least 14,000 people have been killed in 2023, in Sudan **PHOTO: UNICEF**

Hong Kong convicts 1st person under new law

HONG KONG, 19 SEPT

The first person convicted under a tough new Hong Kong national security law was sentenced on Thursday to 14 months in prison for wearing a T-shirt with a protest slogan. Chu Kai-pong, 27, wore a shirt on June 12 reading "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times," a slogan chanted during anti-government protests in 2019. That day was the fifth anniversary of a demonstration in which thousands of people surrounded the city's legislative council complex to protest a now-withdrawn extradition bill. Months of often-violent protests followed as demonstrators expanded their demands to call for greater police accountability and democracy. Authorities have said the protest slogan could imply the separation of Hong Kong from China — a red line for Beijing. Chu pleaded guilty in court on Monday to the charge of carrying out an act or acts with a seditious intent. The city's new security law, which critics say further stifles freedom of expression, took effect in March and imposes stiffer punishments for sedition offenses. *—AP*

PHOTO: PTI

Venezuela's Oppn leader 'forced' to accept Maduro's win

CARACAS, 19 SEPT

In order to leave the country and begin his exile in Spain, the opposition leader of Venezuela Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia was asked to sign a document containing the commitment to recognize the victory of Nicolas Maduro in the presidential elections at the end of July. Gonzalez Urrutia himself wrote this in a note released in the hours in which the unsigned version of the document is circulating. A statement in which he tells "the whole truth about what happened", recalling that "the regime is doing everything it can to make Venezuelans lose hope". The president of the Parliament Jorge Rodriguez, and the vice president, her sister Delcy, showed up at the Spanish ambassador's residence in Caracas, where the opponent had moved shortly before. In their hands they had a "document that I would have to sign to allow me to leave the country. ***—Courtesy, Agenzia Nova***

Bank of England widely expected to hold interest rates

LONDON, 19 SEPT

The Bank of England is widely expected to announce it is keeping interest rates unchanged later Thursday despite a big cut from the US Federal Reserve, its first since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic more than four years ago. Most economists think that a majority — potentially a small majority — of the nine-member Monetary Policy Committee, will opt to keep the bank's main interest rate unchanged at 5 per cent amid ongoing concerns about inflation, particularly the elevated levels in the crucial services sector, which accounts for around 80 per cent of the British economy. Figures on Wednesday showed that inflation overall in the UK held steady at an annual rate of 2.2 per cent in August. ***—AP***

8 hurt after Hezbollah fires anti-tank missiles at Israel

Israel is moving its troops towards North Lebanon border

JERUSALEM, 19 SEPT

At least eight people in Israel were wounded Thursday in an anti-tank guided missile attack on the Lebanon border that was claimed by the Hezbollah terror group, while others were injured in a subsequent drone strike.

Rambam medical centre in Haifa said it admitted two people in moderate-to-serious condition while Ziv Hospital in Safed said it admitted six who were lightly hurt. The Hezbollah attack struck the Ramim Ridge area. The terror group claimed to have targeted an IDF position. At least two anti-tank missiles were fired.

A video shared on social media showed a projectile hitting a chicken coop in the Margaliot agricultural community. There were no injuries to people. The building was full of livestock at the time, and it was not clear if the birds were harmed.

Later in the day, several explosive-laden drones launched from Lebanon struck northern Israel. According to the IDF, one of the drones impacted outside of the northern community of Ya'ara in the Western Galilee. Several people were reportedly wounded by the impact.

Israeli soldiers evacuate wounded people near the Israeli border with Lebanon on Thursday **PHOTO: FLASH90**

Death toll rises to 20 in walkie-talkie explosions

A new series of extraordinary explosions aimed at Hezbollah this time targeting walkie-talkies – has killed at least 20 and wounded more than 450 in cities across Lebanon, as international observers warned that the simultaneous detonation of thousands of booby-trapped communications devices may constitute a war crime.

The targeted detonations of the walkie-talkies came one day after more than 2,800 were injured and 12 killed by exploding pagers in an attack blamed on Israel that world leaders and diplomats have warned could lead to an all-out conflict between Israel and the powerful militant group despite efforts by the US and UN to avert an escalation with Hezbollah.

A source in Hezbollah confirmed that walkie-talkies used by the group were targeted in Wednesday's attack. A senior security source said the individual explosions were "small in size", similar to Tuesday's attacks.

UN secretary general António Guterres condemned the attacks and called for restraint from both Hezbollah and Israel.

Guterres also suggested the operation may have been planned as a prelude to a major Israeli attack on Lebanon. "Obviously the logic of making all these devices explode is to do it as a pre-emptive strike before a major military operation," Guterres told reporters. *—AP*

12 PLACES TARGETED

RUSSIAN ATTACKS KILL 5, INJURE 31 ACROSS UKRAINE

Russian forces struck 12 places **PHOTO: SERHII LYSAK/TELEGRAM**

KYIV, 19 SEPT

Russian attacks across Ukraine killed five civilians and injured at least 31 over the past day, regional authorities reported early on 19 September.

The Ukrainian Air Force reported downing all 42 drones launched by Russia overnight, as well as one Kh-59/69 guided air missile. Russia also launched three S-300/S-400 anti-aircraft guided missiles from Belgorod Oblast toward the city of Kharkiv.

No casualties were reported in Kharkiv, but 7 people were injured and one person was killed as a result of Russian attacks in Kharkiv Oblast over the past day. Russian shelling injured three women and three men aged 50 to 85 in Kupiansk, Governor Oleh Syniehubov reported. In the nearby village of Hlushkivka, shelling injured a 50-year-old man and killed a 55-year-old woman.

In Zaporizhzhia, a guided bomb attack killed one 74-year-old woman and injured two other women aged 67. In total, Russian forces struck 12 settlements in the region 161 times over the past day, Zaporizhzhia Oblast Governor Ivan Fedorov reported.

Nikopol in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast came under Russian drone and artillery attacks over the past day, killing a 42-year-old man and injuring four people, including a 9-year-old boy. *—Courtesy, The Kyiv Independent*

'Ukraine using Indian arms against Russia'

Artillery ammunition manufactured in India is being diverted to Ukraine "despite protests from Moscow," Reuters reported on Sept. 19, citing customs data and nearly a dozen Indian and European government and defense industry officials. One of Russia's strategic allies, India has maintained its close economic and diplomatic ties with Moscow since February 2022, with bilateral trade reaching a historic high in 2023. Indian-made shells have been flowing into Ukraine via Europe for over a year, according to Reuters.*—Courtesy, Kyiv Independent*

Kim bolstering nuclear, conventional weapons

SEOUL, 19 SEPT

North Korea said Thursday that leader Kim Jong Un supervised successful tests of two types of missiles — one designed to carry a "super-large conventional warhead" and the other likely for a nuclear warhead, as he ordered officials to bolster up his country's military capabilities to repel United States-led threats.

The tests appear to be the same as the multiple missile launches that neighbouring countries said North Korea performed Wednesday, extending its run of weapons displays as confrontations with the US and South Korea escalate.

The official Korean Central News Agency said that Kim oversaw the launch of the country's newly built Hwasongpho-11-Da-4.5 ballistic missile tipped with a dummy "4.5-tonne super-large conventional warhead." It said the test-firing was meant to verify an ability to accurately hit a 320 kilometre-range target, suggesting it's a weapon aimed at striking sites in South Korea.

KCNA said Kim also guided the launch of an improved "strategic" cruise missile, a word implying the weapon was developed to carry a nuclear warhead. After the tests, Kim stressed the need to continue to "bolster up the nuclear force" and acquire "overwhelming offensive capability in the field of conventional weapons, too," according to KCNA.

It cited Kim as saying that North Korea can thwart its enemies' intentions to invade only when it has strong military power. KCNA released photos of a missile hitting a ground target. *—PTI*

SLUMPS BY 35%

Canada reduces study permits for int'l students

OTTAWA, 19 SEPT

PHOTO: FREEPIK

In a significant move, Canada said that it is taking steps to manage its temporary resident population by reducing the number of study permits issued to international students and tightening eligibility for work permits.

Notably, the government plans to reduce the number of study permits from 4,85,000 in 2024 to 4,37,000 in 2025, a 10 per cent decrease.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the decision of reducing the number of study permits granted to foreign students and said that when "bad actors" abuse the immigration system, "we crack down."

Sharing a post on X, Trudeau wrote, "We're granting 35% fewer international student permits this year. And next year, that number's going down by another 10%."

"Immigration is an advantage for our economy -- but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down," the post added.

Notably, on Wednesday, Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced additional measures to manage the volume of temporary resident arrivals, uphold the integrity of our immigration system and protect vulnerable people.

The 2025-2026 study permit intake cap will include master's and doctoral students who will now have to submit a provincial or territorial attestation letter.

"We will be reserving approximately 12% of allocation spaces for these students in recognition of the benefits they bring to the Canadian labour market," it said.

Meanwhile, Miller in a statement said that the action is being taken to strengthen temporary residence programmes and emphasised preserving the integrity of the Canadian immigration system. *—ANI*

AT LEAST 1,000 EVACUATED AS FLOODS HIT ITALY

ROME, 19 SEPT

About a thousand residents were evacuated in the northern Italian region of Emilia-Romagna after it was hit by torrential rains and severe flooding overnight, local media reported Thursday.

Rivers flooded in three of the region's provinces — Ravenna, Bologna and Faenza — as local mayors asked people to stay on upper floors or leave their houses.

At least 800 residents in the Ravenna area and almost 200 in Bologna province spent the night in shelters, schools and sports centres as local rivers overflowed.

Trains were suspended and schools closed across the affected areas, and residents have been advised to avoid travel and work from home where possible. *—AP*

100 ex-Republican officials call Trump 'unfit to serve'

WASHINGTON, 19 SEPT

More than 100 Republican former national security and foreign policy officials on Wednesday endorsed Kamala Harris for president in a joint letter, calling Donald Trump "unfit to serve" another term in the White House.

Former officials from the presidential administrations of Republicans Ronald Reagan, George H W Bush, George W Bush and Donald Trump, as well as Democrats Bill Clinton and Barack Obama voiced their support for Harris, the Democratic nominee for president in this November's election. They were joined by some former GOP members of Congress. It went on: "We expect to disagree with Kamala Harris on many domestic and foreign policy issues, but we believe that she possesses the essential qualities to serve as president and Donald Trump does not. We therefore support her election to be president."

Among the signees were former defense secretaries William Cohen and Chuck Hagel, who served in the Clinton and Obama administrations, respectively. Others include William Webster, a former CIA and FBI director under the Reagan and first Bush administrations, as well as Michael Hayden, a former CIA and NSA director under the younger Bush and the Obama administrations.

—Courtesy, The Guardian

Quad more strategically aligned: White House

WASHINGTON, 19 SEPT

The upcoming Quad Summit in Delaware will show that the four-nation grouping is more strategically aligned and relevant than ever before, the White House has said.

QUAD, comprising Australia, Japan, India and the US, is an initiative of President Joe Biden. In the first 100 days of his presidency, Biden convened a virtual leadership summit of the QUAD countries in 2020. It was India's turn to host the Quad Summit.

But following a request from Washington, India agreed to host the Summit next year.

Since then QUAD leaders have been holding an annual summit on a rotation basis. "We believe you'll see... that the Quad is more strategically aligned and more relevant than ever before," John Kirby, White House National Security Council Strategic Communications Director told reporters at a news conference here on Wednesday. *—PTI*

NEW STRAIN SPREADS

Mining town in Congo becomes Mpox hot spot

KAMITUGA, 19 SEPT

Slumped on the ground over a mound of dirt, Divine Wisoba pulled weeds from her daughter's grave. The 1-month-old died from Mpox in eastern Congo in August, but Wisoba, 21, was too traumatised to attend the funeral.

In her first visit to the cemetery, she wept into her shirt for the child she lost and worried about the rest of her family.

"When she was born, it was as if God had answered our prayers — we wanted a girl," Wisoba said of little Maombi Katengey. "But our biggest joy was transformed into devastation."

Mpox — which causes mostly mild symptoms like fever and body aches, but can trigger serious cases with prominent blisters on the face, hands, chest and genitals — had been spreading mostly undetected for years in Africa, until a 2022 outbreak reached more than 70 countries.

PHOTO: AP

Health officials have zeroed in on Kamituga, a remote yet bustling gold mining town of some 3,00,000 people that attracts miners, sex workers and traders who are constantly on the move. Cases from other parts of eastern Congo can be traced back here, officials say, with the first originating in the nightclub scene.

Last month, the World Health Organisation said mpox outbreaks might be stopped in the next six months, with governments' leadership and cooperation.

The vaccine vacuum

Health experts agree: What's needed most are vaccines — even if they go only to adults, under emergency approval in Congo. None has arrived in Kamituga, though it's a priority city in South Kivu, officials said. It's unclear when or how they will.

A new variant

Experts say a lack of resources and knowledge about the new strain makes it difficult to advise people on protecting themselves. An internal report circulated among aid groups and agencies and seen by AP labelled confidence in the available information about mpox in eastern Congo and neighbouring countries low. *—PTI*

Gold rises ₹100; silver jumps ₹500 after fed rate cut

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Gold prices rose by Rs 100 to Rs 75,650 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday due to increased demand from local jewellers and strong global cues after the US Federal Reserve cut interest rate. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 75,550 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Silver prices rose for the sixth straight session, climbing by Rs 500 to touch Rs 91,000 per kg on Thursday, according to All India Sarafa Association. It had closed at Rs 90,500 per kg in the previous session. In the six trading sessions, silver prices have zoomed by Rs 7,200 per kg. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased by Rs 100 to Rs 75,300 per 10 grams on Thursday. Meanwhile, gold and silver prices skyrocketed in the futures trade. On MCX, gold contracts for October delivery jumped by Rs 498 or 0.68 per cent to Rs 73,553 per 10 grams. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 10P to settle at 83.66 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

The rupee strengthened by 10 paise to hit its two-month high level of 83.66 against the US dollar on Thursday after the US Federal Reserve cut the benchmark interest rate by 0.50 per cent, boosting investors' sentiment. Forex traders said massive buying in domestic equities and inflow of foreign funds also supported the local unit. At the same time, some initial gains in the American currency post Fed's announcement failed to resist recessionary fear in the world's largest economy. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the Indian currency opened at 83.70 and touched the intra-day high of 83.56 against the greenback. During the session, it touched the lowest level of 83.73 against the dollar. The currency had earlier recorded the same closing level on July 22 this year. *—PTI*

France's Thomson enters Indian audio market

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

French consumer electronics brand Thomson, through its brand licensee Super Plastronics Pvt Ltd (SPPL), on Thursday announced its foray into the Indian audio market with the launch of soundbars. Thomson, which is already present here in the TV and other appliances segments, also has plans to expand its play into the audio segment by launching more products in the soundbar and entering into the larger speaker and party speakers segment, SPPL CEO Avneet Singh Marwah said. As part of SPPL, it has invested Rs 50 crore to set up a new manufacturing unit at its existing Noida plant, which will produce half a million units in a year, he added. According to Marwah, the Indian audio market is experiencing rapid growth. Sales of products such as soundbars have increased after a rise in sales of 4K smart TVs and the growing consumption of OTT content. Besides Thomson, SPPL has licenses for international brands. *—PTI*

Mkt hits record highs on US Fed rate cut; banks lead gains

Sensex climbs 236.57 pts to settle at lifetime high of 83,184.80

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty climbed to fresh record high levels on Thursday in line with firm global trends after the US Federal Reserve announced the first cut in policy rate in more than four years.

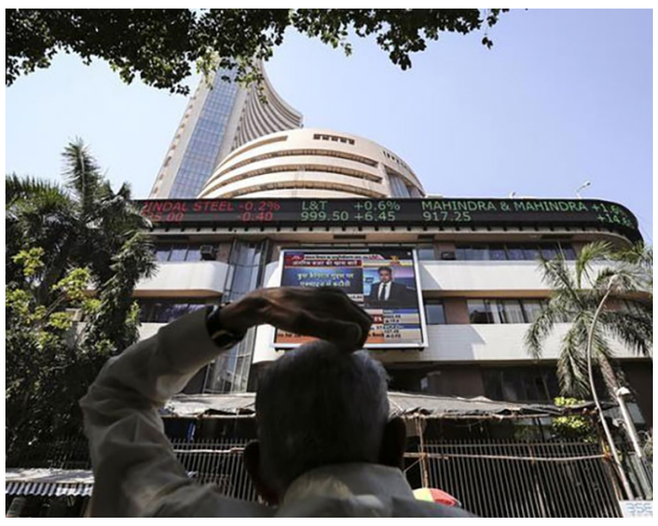
The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 236.57 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at a lifetime high of 83,184.80. During the day, it jumped 825.38 points or 0.99 per cent to scale a new all-time intra-day high of 83,773.61.

The NSE Nifty gained 38.25 points or 0.15 per cent to 25,415.80. During the day, it surged 234.4 points or 0.92 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day record peak of 25,611.95.

From the 30 Sensex firms, NTPC, Nestle, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank were the biggest gainers.

HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Adani Ports, Larsen & Toubro, JSW Steel, State Bank of India, Tech Mahindra and Bajaj Finance were among the laggards from the pack.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,153.69 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.



NSE Nifty gained 38.25 points or 0.15 per cent to 25,415.80 *PHOTO: PTI*

- From the 30 Sensex firms, NTPC, Nestle, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank were the biggest gainers

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 1.21 per cent to USD 74.54 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark dropped 131.43 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 82,948.23 on Wednesday. The NSE Nifty also declined 41 points or 0.16 per cent to close at 25,377.55. *—PTI*

WORLD MKTS GAIN AFTER FED'S 1ST RATE CUT IN 4YRS

NEW YORK,19 SEPT

Markets in Europe and Asia shot higher on Thursday after the Federal Reserve kicked off its efforts to prevent a recession in the US with a bigger-than-usual cut to interest rates.

US futures were higher after a lackluster response on Wall Street to the Fed's move the day before. The future for the S&P 500 jumped 1.3 per cent and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.8 per cent.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index rose 2.1 per cent to 37,155.33, lifted by major export manufacturers' shares. Toyota Motor Corp. surged 5.1 per cent, Sony Group Corp. added 2.9 per cent and Hitachi Ltd. climbed 5.8 per cent.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 2 per cent to 18,013.16. *—PTI*

US cut the federal funds rate target range to 4.75-5% *PHOTO: PIXABAY*

'US Fed rate cut will not impact India's i'ntl inflows'

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The US Fed rate cut of 50 basis points is unlikely to have any significant impact on foreign inflows into India, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said on Thursday.

He said the US Federal Reserve has done what it assesses is good for the largest economy in the world, but the RBI will take a decision on interest rate cut keeping the Indian economy in mind.

"It is a positive for the global economy, including the Indian economy. It is a 50 basis points cut from a high level. I don't see that making any significant impact on inflows. We have to see from (the point of) where the (US interest rates) levels are. We have to see how do other economies' markets behave," Seth told reporters here.

Late Wednesday, the US Federal Open Market Committee voted to cut the federal funds rate target range by 50 bps to 4.75-5 per cent , from 5.25-5.50 per cent, against expectations of a cut half that size. The US central bank had kept interest rates at an over two-decade high for 14 months.

The RBI has left the repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent since February 2023 as it tackled to bring down inflation.

As per latest data, headline retail inflation in August came in below the central bank's medium-term target of 4 per cent for the second month in a row, standing at 3.65 per cent. *—PTI*

SpiceJet's ₹3k crore share sale sees oversubscription

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

SpiceJet, which has statutory dues of more than Rs 601 crore, has received a good response for its Rs 3,000 crore-worth sale of shares to qualified institutional buyers.

Operating with a reduced fleet as well as facing financial and legal headwinds, the carrier is looking to raise funds.

Sources in the know on Wednesday said the qualified institutional placement has been oversubscribed, with participation from various investors, including family offices and institutional funds.

Some of the investors include family offices of Madhu Kela, Akash Bhanshali, Sanjay Dangi and Rohit Kothari, the sources said.

There was no official comment from the airline.

As per the document, the airline has not made provident fund payments to the tune of over Rs 135 crore from April 2020 to August 2023, as per the document.

The carrier's statutory dues totalled Rs 601.5 crore as on September 15 and net proceeds from the placement will also be utilised towards clearing the dues.

PHOTO: PTI

Of the total amount, Rs 297.5 crore is towards deposit of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS), Rs 156.4 crore related to deposit of employees' provident fund, and Rs 145.1 crore pertains to Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The proceeds will also be used for settling liabilities of creditors, including aircraft and engine lessors, engineering vendors and financiers. *—PTI*

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

Influential nations urge G20 countries to rise climate finance

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

A group of influential countries has urged the G20 nations to increase the overall pool of financing for climate action and urgently shift away from investments in fossil fuels.

In a letter to the G20 bloc, the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) said all countries must work together to mobilise as much funding as possible to tackle the climate crisis as they convene to set a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The NCQG is the new amount that developed nations must mobilise annually, starting in 2025, to support climate action in developing countries.

However, slow progress in mid-year UN talks in Bonn, Germany, and technical discussions in Baku has cast doubt on the possibility of setting an ambitious new climate finance target at the conference.

According to a report released by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on September 10, between USD 5.012 trillion and USD 6.852 trillion would be needed cumulatively until 2030 to support developing nations in achieving their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which are national plans to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Earlier this year, India said that in line with the needs of developing countries, developed nations needed to provide at least USD 1 trillion per year, primarily in the form of grants and concessional finance. *—PTI*

In a letter to the G20 bloc, High Ambition Coalition said all countries must work together to mobilise as much funding as possible *PHOTO: PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

'India's logistics cost to reduce to single-digit soon'

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

India's logistics cost will come down to single-digit within the next five years, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Addressing the 'Deloitte Government Summit' here, Gadkari said the ministry is constructing several highways and expressways.

However, according to quick estimates of economic think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the logistics cost in India ranged from 7.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent of GDP in 2021-22. *—PTI*

Direct tax collection soars as it surges by 21% to reach at ₹12.01 lakh crore

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

India's direct tax net collection for the financial year 2024-25 has seen a significant surge, with an increase of 21.48 per cent as of 17 September this year, the data from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) shows.

The gross collection of direct tax stood at Rs 12.01 lakh crore for the period April to September. This is an increase from the previous year's Rs 9.88 lakh crore, the data shows.

The net collection has seen an uptick of 16.12 per cent at Rs 9,95,766 crore, as against Rs 8, 57, 528 cr on 17 September 2023.

The data indicates that the key contributor in the collections is a major uptick in the Securities Transaction Tax (STT), which doubled to Rs 26,154 crore from Rs 13,352 crore in 2023 during this period.

Net collection has seen an uptick of 16.12% at Rs 9L cr *PHOTO: PTI*

The collections STT indicates the increased investor exposure in the equity markets.

The data indicates that tax collections from the corporate tax also increased significantly by 18.26 per cent.

The corporate tax collection stood at Rs 5.58 lakh crore, as compared to Rs 4.72 lakh crore collected from April 1 to September 17, 2023.

As per the data, personal income tax collections rose to Rs 6.14 lakh crore from Rs 5 lakh crore. This is an increase of 22.8 per cent from the previous year. *—PTI*

India-US trade can reach $500B from $200B: Puri

HOUSTON, 19 SEPT

United States is India's sixth largest energy trade partner and the growing bilateral trade has the potential to cross the USD 500 billion-mark from USD 200 billion at present, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said.

The hydrocarbon trade between the two countries has reached USD 13.6 billion in 2023-24 -- nearly double the figure from 2018-19, Puri said at a roundtable with energy companies.

The roundtable, held on the sidelines of the global energy conference Gastech 2024, here was attended by Mukesh Aghi, President and CEO of USISPF, and Consul General of India in Houston, D C Manjunath, among others.

Puri said that the US is now India's sixth-largest energy trade partner, with hydrocarbon trade valued at USD 2.43 billion in the first two months of FY 2024-25.

PHOTO: PTI

This momentum indicates the potential for total bilateral trade to soar from around USD 200 billion to over USD 500 billion, he said.

The conference was organised by USISPF, an advocacy group dedicated to strengthening the strategic partnership between the US and India.

This initiative aims to develop and deploy low-carbon solutions, further reinforcing the commitment to sustainable energy practices. *—PTI*

S&P: India will be third-largest economy by FY31

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

India is on track to becoming the third-largest economy by 2030-31, driven by a projected annual growth rate of 6.7 per cent this fiscal, S&P Global said in a report on Thursday.

The report also said that with 8.2 per cent growth rate in FY2024, continued reforms are crucial to improving business transactions and logistics, boosting private sector investment, and reducing reliance on public capital.

It said equity markets are expected to stay dynamic and competitive due to strong growth prospects and better regulation, and foreign inflows into Indian government bonds have surged since the country joined major emerging market indexes, with further growth anticipated. *—PTI*

CESC, Ecoren sign pact for 686.85MW wind project

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

CESC on Thursday said its arm has signed an agreement with Ecoren Energy India to set up a wind power project of up to 686.85 MW. Ecoren Energy India Pvt Ltd is neither a related party nor a part of its promoter or promoter group, CESC Ltd said in an exchange filing. "Subsidiary Purvah Green Power Private Ltd has entered into a binding term sheet with Ecoren Energy India...for setting up wind power project of up to 686.85 MW," it said. The project is likely to be commissioned within three years, subject to the receipt of the relevant licenses/ permits/ approvals from various authorities, the company said. *—PTI*

TO EASE EXPORTS

Govt steps up to resolve traders' shipping woes

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The government on Thursday announced steps, including reducing certain charges at ports and purchase of five additional second-hand container vessels by SCI, to resolve shipping sector-related problems of exporters and importers.

These measures were announced after a meeting of all the concerned stakeholders of the international trade segment, including senior officials of ministries like commerce and industry, shipping, ports, finance, civil aviation and railways; apex exporters body FIEO (federation of Indian export organisations), customs officials, freight forwarders, transport operators and shipping companies.

The measures were announced after a meeting of all the concerned stakeholders of the international trade segment *PHOTO: PTI*

Exporting community and experts have flagged shipping sector issues which are hurting the country's exports, which has contracted by 9.3 per cent in August. The issues figured in the discussions include container shortage, surge in ocean freight rate and shipping cost, shipping delays at the Indian ports, and turnaround time at the ports.

Briefing media after the deliberations, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that several issues were discussed to look at addressing the challenges that exporters and importers are facing in the shipping area.

The Railway board and Container Corporation announced that empty containers can now be stored at the yard at zero cost for 90 days. The charges of Rs 3,000, that is being levied beyond 90 days, are now halved to Rs 1,500.

Further, the storage and handling rates will be reduced for containers from Rs 9,000 to Rs 2,000 (for a 40 ft container) and from Rs 6,000 to Rs 1,000 (for a 20 ft container).

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) announced that custom clearances at the ports will be expedited by simultaneous screening of 22 containers. *—PTI*

India's zinc consumption to touch 2 million tonnes

UDAIPUR, 19 SEPT

India's zinc consumption is estimated to increase to over 2 million tonnes in the next 10 years from the current 1.1 million tonnes, International Zinc Association (IZA) said on Thursday.

Speaking on the sidelines of Zinc College, 2024 event here, Andrew Green, Executive Director of IZA, said: "The zinc consumption and demand in India is 1.1 million tonnes (MT), which is higher than the current production in India. ...this is likely to go over 2 MT in the next 10 years. That's the forecast."

Zinc College is organised every two years by the International Zinc Association in partnership with a member company. Hindustan Zinc Ltd is the partner of Zinc College 2024.

PHOTO: PTI

He further said that the global zinc market is around 13.5 million tonnes per annum in terms of primary production. And one of the big differences is that if one looks at the per capita use of zinc, on the global average it's about four to five times higher than what's happening in India. *—PTI*

Punjab win 14th Hockey India Junior Men Nati'l C'ship

JALANDHAR, 19 SEPT

Punjab edged out Uttar Pradesh 4-3 in a thrilling shootout to claim the 14th Hockey India Junior Men National Championship title here on Thursday. In a tightly-contested final, Sukhwinder Singh (5'), Jarman Singh (33'), and Jobanpreet Singh (39') found the back of the net for Punjab, while Ajeet Yadav (31'), Suraj Pal (48'), and Akash Pal (54') scored for Uttar Pradesh, leaving the teams locked at 3-3 in regulation time. During the shootout, Uttar Pradesh's Akash Pal, Nitish Bhardwaj, and Ajeet Yadav converted their attempts, but Punjab prevailed as Japnit Singh, Sukhwinder Singh, Jarman Singh and Lovenoor Singh all scored to secure the title. In the third-place match, Haryana outclassed Karnataka with a commanding 5-0 victory. Amit Khasa (30'), Navraj Singh (50'), Nitin (54'), Manish Kumar (55') and Sahil Ruhal (59') scored to give Haryana third place on the podium. *—PTI*

Tvesa makes solid start at La Sella Open

DÉNIA, 19 SEPT

Indian golfer Tvesa Malik made a steady start with a two-under 70 in the opening round of the million-dollar La Sella Open on the Ladies European Tour here on Thursday. Tvesa, who is seeking her maiden win and also preparing for her home open, the Hero Women's Indian Open next month, teed off from the tenth. She had a very steady back nine with eight pars and a birdie in between on par-4 15th. On her second nine, she started with a birdie on the first and added one more on the third to go to a healthy 3-under. She then dropped her only shot of the day on the Par-3 fourth and parred the remaining holes for a 2-under card. Tvesa, who lost in a play-off at the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open, was lying T-15, though the position will change as the round is yet to be completed. *—PTI*

Ex-Ars player held for alleged $800K drug smuggling

LONDON, 19 SEPT

A soccer player who once appeared for Arsenal in the Champions League has been charged in connection with trying to smuggle cannabis worth 600,000 pounds ($800,000) through a British airport. Jay Emmanuel-Thomas, who currently plays for Scottish second-tier team Greenock Morton, was arrested at his home near Glasgow early Wednesday, the Press Association agency reported Thursday. Emmanuel-Thomas was detained by police and taken to the northern English city of Carlisle to be questioned, the National Crime Agency said. The 33-year-old forward started his career with Arsenal, where he played five games including in the Champions League at Shakhtar Donetsk in November 2010. He later played for English clubs Ipswich, Bristol City and Queens Park Rangers, Aberdeen in Scotland, and in Thailand for PTT Rayong. *—AP*

Healthy Repsol Honda team return to Misano

MISANO, 19 SEPT

A rejuvenated Joan Mir and Luca Marini are ready to make amends after illness dealt a harsh blow the first time around, the unique 2024 schedule offering them redemption in Misano. Just a week later, the MotoGP World Championship is back at the Misano World Circuit Marco Simoncelli for a second round - the Gran Premio dell'Emilia-Romagna. It will be a week of taking profit from the lessons learned in the previous visit and the important Monday Test for everyone on the grid. *—ANI*

Ash & Jaddu quell turmoil at Chepauk

Ashwin hits his sixth Test ton; Jadeja not out at 86

CHENNAI, 19 SEPT

Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin sparkled on home turf with his sixth Test hundred as he combined with Ravindra Jadeja to steer India out of trouble and post a formidable 339 for six on day one of the first Test against Bangladesh here on Thursday.

Ashwin (102 batting) and Jadeja (86 batting) added 195 runs (174 minutes, 225 balls) for a riveting unbroken seventh wicket stand after young pacer Hasan Mahmud (4/58) reduced India to 144 for six, despite Yashasvi Jaiswal making a solid 56.

The ebb and flow of the day's proceedings was quite remarkable and mostly revolved around Ashwin, Jadeja and Mahmud, who made his Test debut in March this year and was just three games old in the format before this match. In a stunning first spell of 5-2-6-3, the 24-year-old Mahmud accounted for the cream of Indian top-order -- Rohit Sharma (6), Shubman Gill (0) and Virat Kohli (6) -- before snapping Rishabh Pant's return to Test cricket (39 off 52 balls) in the initial moments of the second session.

Ashwin went off the blocks with a flurry of boundaries, a firm validation of his oh-so-smooth timing born out of fluent hand movement through shots and precise footwork.

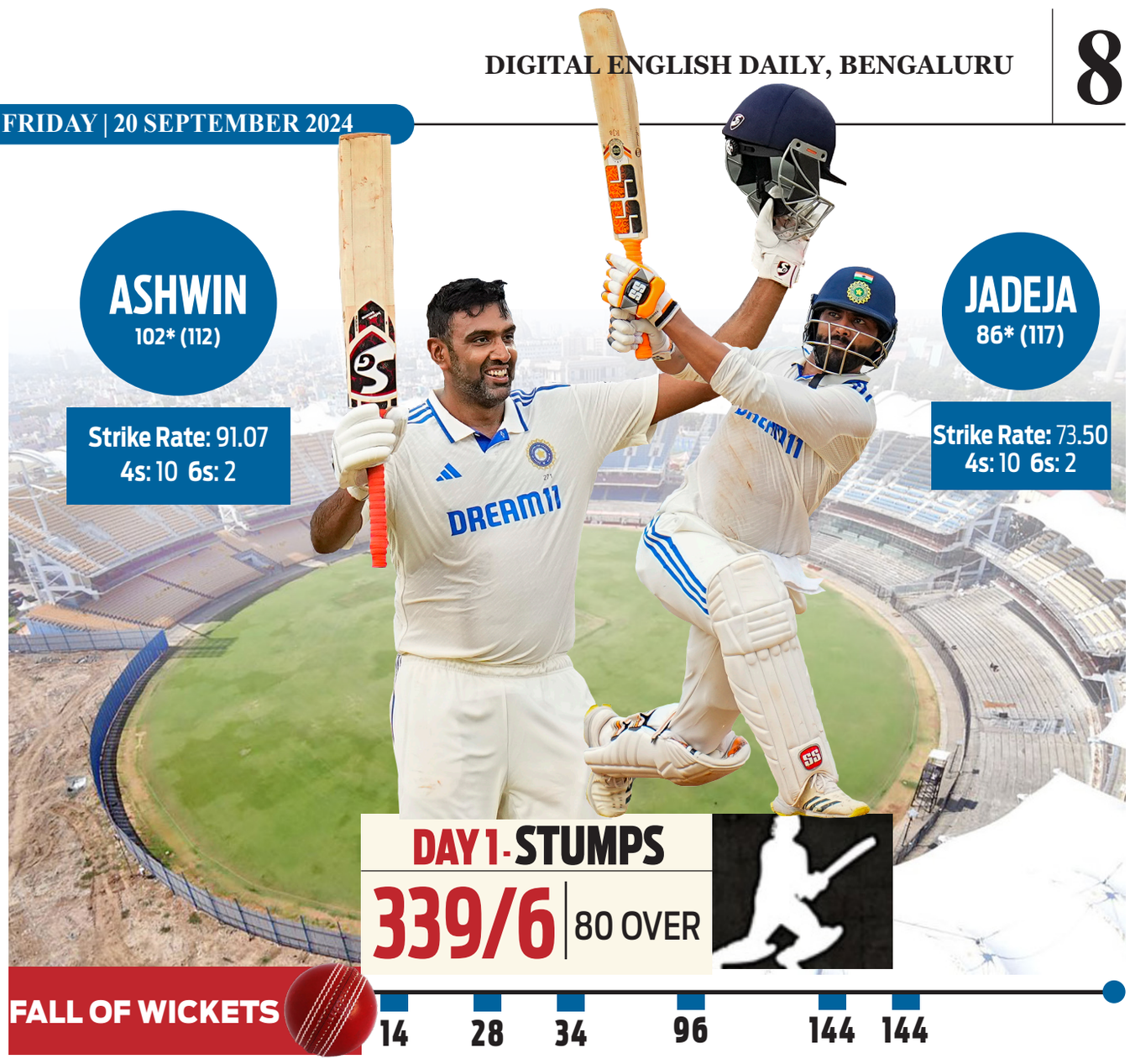
There was this ramp shot off Mahmud, who tried to rattle Ashwin with a short-pitched delivery that climbed onto his body.

Jadeja was a tad different in his approach. Sensing that Ashwin was in good touch, the left-hander had the simple job of keeping his end going and he did that with minimum fuss.

A past master in operating from behind the giant shadows of superstars, Jadeja looked extremely comfortable doing that once more, providing the assurance Ashwin needed. But there were moments, the showman in Jadeja came forth and Shakib was the aggrieved party, getting hammered for three fours. Kohli walked into the Chepauk amid loud cheers and looked confident. But an old failing resurfaced to haunt him.

Mahmud pitched one just short of the length outside the off-stump, and the length was not suitable for a drive.

Jaiswal and Pant added 62 runs for the fourth wicket to temporarily check the free fall before both perished in close succession in the middle session. *—PTI*



Vaishali and Vantika notched wins against Lela Javakhishvili and Bella Khotenashvili on Thursday *PHOTO: X/@SPORTWALKMEDIA*

Chess Olympiad: Indian women crush Georgia

BUDAPEST, 19 SEPT

- Vaishali, Vantika notched wins against Lela Javakhishvili and Bella Khotenashvili as Indian women thumped second seeds Georgia 3-1

Grandmaster R Vaishali and Vantika Agrawal put up impressive performances as Indian women defeated Georgia while World Championship challenger D Gukesh led the men to victory over China in the seventh round as both teams continued their unbeaten streak in 45th Chess Olympiad here.

Vaishali and Vantika notched wins against Lela Javakhishvili and Bella Khotenashvili as Indian women thumped second seeds Georgia 3-1, while the men eked out a 2.5-1.5 over China.

On a day that saw D Harika settling for a draw with Nana Dzagnidze and Divya Deshmukh being held by Nino Batsiashvili from a better position, it was Vantika who handled her time pressure extremely well to play almost 20 moves with just about a minute on her clock to win her game and seal India's seventh straight victory.

The Indian women took their tally to an impressive 14 points out of a possible 14 and stretched their lead to two points over nearest rivals Poland, Kazakhstan and France who all have 12 points apiece.

In a surprising turn of events a blunder by Olivia Kiolbasa of Poland against Nataliya Buksa of Ukraine cost the Polish team dearly in the sixth hour of play as what looked like a certain victory became a 2-2 draw. In the open section, Indian Grandmaster Gukesh showed the way.

R Praggnanandhaa played out a quick draw as black against Yangyi Yu of China while P Harikrishna pressed for some time before the position petered out to be equal in the ensuing rook and pawns endgame against Wang Yue of China on the fourth board.

With just four rounds to come, the Indian men have done everything correct thus far and are sitting pretty with a 100 per cent score like their female counterparts. *—PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Man City and Inter Milan draw 0-0; PSG beat Girona

GENEVA, 19 SEPT

The 0-0 draws between Manchester City and Inter Milan in their rematch of the 2023 final, after Bologna and Shakhtar Donetsk also could not find a goal, capped an untypically goal-shy evening for the Champions League on Wednesday.

Just 13 were scored in six games one day after 28 were fired in Tuesday, including nine by Bayern Munich alone.

How unusual was this? Two 0-0 draws after just 12 of 144 games to be played in the new league phase is already halfway to the total of four in 96 games one year ago in the group-stage format that is now abolished. The entire competition averaged three goals per game last season.

Ilkay Gundogan wasted two late chances for manager Pep Guardiola's team, failing to convert two headed chances.

It was the first time City had failed to score at home in Europe's elite tournament since being held 0-0 by Sporting Lisbon in March 2022, and just the second time at home in all competitions since then. The other was a 0-0 draw with Arsenal in the Premier League in March.

But the result saw City extend its six-year unbeaten home run in European games to 32, dating to a 2-1 loss to Lyon.

PSG scores late to beat Girona

Paris Saint-Germain and Girona also were heading for a blank until a horrible 90th-minute error by the Spanish debutant's goalkeeper, Paulo Gazzaniga — spilling a cross by Nuno Mendes through his own legs — gifted a 1-0 win.

Slovan Bratislava was overmatched in its first game since 1992-93, the first season of the Champions League rebrand from the old European Cup, and with Georgia defender Guram Kashia making his competition debut at age 37.

They could not keep out Celtic, which won 5-1 in Glasgow. Ireland internationals Liam Scales and Adam Idah, Japan forwards Kyogo Furuhashi and Daizen Maeda, and Arne Engels of Belgium scored for the champion of Scotland.

"The quality of the goals was sensational," Celtic coach Brendan Rodgers said after just a fourth win in 33 Champions League games for the 1967 European Cup winner. *—AP*

DORTMUND KEEPS CLEAN SHEET SOMEHOW

Dortmund's defense had a Champions League-best six clean sheets last season on its way to the final, where Real Madrid found two late goals to take the title. Somehow, goalkeeper Gregor Kobel kept out Brugge despite 18 goal attempts including a close-range shot by Hugo Vetlesen that rattled the cross bar in the 12th minute. Vetlesen's effort ended a manic series of four shots in a matter of seconds from a corner including a diving save by Kobel.

The Switzerland keeper's five saves meant Dortmund did not pay for its own wastefulness in front of goal until taking the lead in the 76th from a Gittens shot that deflected off two defenders before looping past Simon Mignolet into the Brugge net. *—AP*

Singapore GP: Piastri defends McLaren over rear-wing flex

SINGAPORE, 19 SEPT

Oscar Piastri says he's happy with the apparent flexible rear wing on his race-winning car but it's not a "magic bullet" making McLaren the team to beat in Formula 1 ahead of the Singapore Grand Prix.

Widely-shared footage from Piastri's win last week in Azerbaijan appears to show part of the rear wing flexing under the airflow at high speed, in a way that could potentially reduce drag and allow the car to go faster.

"It's legal," Piastri said of the wing Thursday. "We get tested a lot and it passes. It's certainly not the magic ticket or magic bullet for why we're competitive, but it's legal. It passes all the tests, so I'm pretty happy with it."

Piastri added the wing isn't in a "grey area" in the F1 rules, which generally ban moving aerodynamic devices, with the exception of the overtake-assisting DRS rear wing flap that all cars have. "I honestly didn't even know that it did that until three days ago," Piastri said. "Obviously in the sport you find every bit of performance that you can without breaking the rules. I feel like that's what we're doing, and that's what you need to do to become a championship-winning car and a championship-winning team." Piastri argued that on-form teams like McLaren — which overtook Red Bull in the constructors' standings last week — inevitably attract more attention. Piastri is fourth in the standings, 91 points off leader Verstappen and 32 behind teammate Lando Norris of Britain, who is Verstappen's closest challenger. *—AP*

'STANDARD PRACTICE'

Nagal demanded fee of $50K to play for India

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

- AITA made its displeasure clear by saying that Nagal, Yuki Bhambri and Sasikumar Mukund, refused duty

The All India Tennis Association on Thursday claimed that Sumit Nagal demanded an annual fee of USD 50,000 to play Davis Cup ties for India but the country's top singles player defended himself, saying it is "standard practice" for athletes to be paid for their services.

Nagal had opted out of the recent Davis Cup tie against Sweden, citing a back strain that also forced him out of the US Open men's doubles competition last month. It was India's best chance to beat Sweden in their own backyard but competing without a singles specialist, the team received a 0-4 hammering. Packed with doubles players and debutants, the team could not even win a set in the World Group I tie. AITA, on Tuesday, made its displeasure clear by saying that the country's top players, including Nagal, Yuki Bhambri and Sasikumar Mukund, refused national duty.

Nagal had entered the ATP 250 Hangzhou Open and was scheduled to play on Thursday but withdrew citing the same back issue. "You tell me why should a player be asking for money to play for the country. This is a big question. He had demanded an annual fee of USD 50,000 (approx 45 lakh) and said if he is not paid, he will not play," Dhupar told PTI. The AITA head was referring to the prize money that AITA receives from the International Tennis Federation (ITF) for Davis Cup participation and distributes among team members. For a World Group I tie, AITA gets around Rs 30 lakh and 70 per cent of it is distributed among the participating players while the remaining 30 per cent is kept by the national federation to manage administrative expenditure.

The prize money goes down for a lower group tie. "No other player asked for additional money over and above their share of the ITF prize money." Nagal did not deny the AITA claim as he put his defence through a statement on social media. *—PTI*

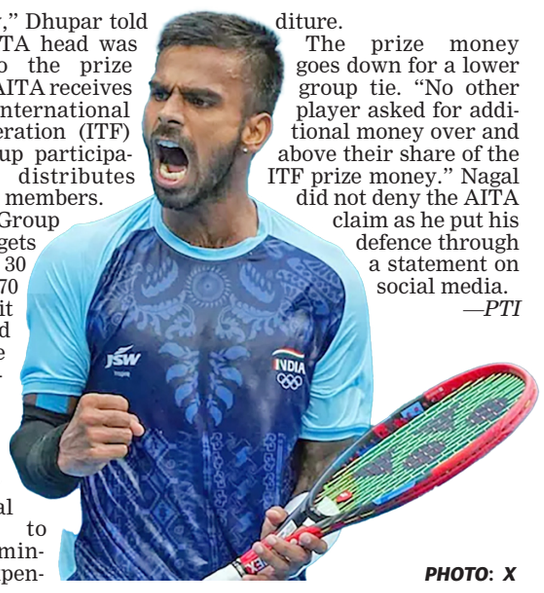


PHOTO: X

Solid top-order display takes India D to 306/5

ANANTAPUR, 19 SEPT

The under-pressure Shreyas Iyer's dismal run continued but strong performances from the other frontline batters, including Sanju Samson, guided India D to 306 for five on the opening day of their Duleep Trophy match against India B here on Thursday.

Iyer, aiming to make a comeback to India's Test squad, fell for a second successive duck in the ongoing tournament.

However, Devdutt Padikkal (50), Srikar Bharat (52), RickyBhui (56) and Samson (89 not out) smashed half-centuries as India D batters produced a solid show.

At stumps, Samson and Saransh Jain (26) were at the crease.

For India B, leg-spinner Rahul Chahar (3/60) was the standout bowler, claiming three wickets. Mukesh Kumar (1/37) and Navdeep Saini (1/51) picked up a wicket each after India B won the toss and elected to field first at the Rural Development Trust Stadium.

Opening the innings, Padikkal and Bharat put together a solid 105-run partnership. However, Saini provided the breakthrough by removing Padikkal, followed by Mukesh dismissing Bharat, with both catches being taken by wicketkeeper Narayan Jagadeesan.

Bhui then took charge, adding 41 runs with Samson to take the team past 200. But Chahar struck again, removing Bhui as India D were reduced to 216 for five. But Samson kept going, blasting 10 fours and three sixes during his 83-ball innings to keep India D on track. *—PTI*